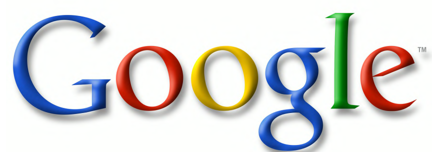

This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at http://books.google.com/

WIDENER
HN NBDP Q

BROWN MARE

by

ALFRED OLLIVANT

23723.1.45

HARVARD COLLEGE
LIBRARY

GIFT OF

JAMES STURGIS PRAY

Charles Eliot Professor of Landscape Architecture

To be kept in the main collection of the
College Library

2E 270/5-

Love to Frances

from –

Marion

August 1920.

THE BROWN MARE

BY ALFRED OLLIVANT

BOB, SON OF BATTLE

RED-COAT CAPTAIN

THE GENTLEMAN

THE TAMING OF JOHN BLUNT

THE ROYAL ROAD

THE BROWN MARE

THE BROWN MARE

ALFRED OLLIVANT

NEW YORK · ALFRED A KNOPF · MCMXVI

23723.1.45

COPYRIGHT, 1916, BY
ALFRED OLLIVANT

Prof. J. S Pray

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To

THE BROWN WOMAN

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	THE BROWN MARE	9
II	THE INVASION OF ENGLAND	28
III	THE BOMBARDMENT; AND A BOY	39
IV	THE MIND OF AN EMPIRE	49
V	THE SHADOW	61
VI	THE INDIAN HOSPITAL	76
VII	THE CONSCRIPT	94
VIII	THE MAN IN COMMAND	109
IX	THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF	121
X	THE COST	134

I owe it to the Editors of *The Atlantic Monthly, Country Life, The Boston Transcript,* and *The Christchurch Times* of New Zealand, that I am allowed to reprint these studies.

THE BROWN MARE

I

HE used to bring her home when he came on his winter's leave in the years before the War, to hunt with the South Down: for she was an unusually fine performer across country. And it was there I met her.

A tall upstanding creature, sixteen hands and over, very high at the withers, not quite clean-bred and yet showing breeding in every line. She did not really carry bone enough for the heavy Wealden clay, in which your horse sinks up to his hocks at every stride; but the Major was clearly always pleased when the big iron-gray Granite had strained a sinew and he could fall back on the mare for an extra day. And little sturdy Humbleton, the very British groom, with the blue eyes, the chestnut hair, and stolid way, was just the same. When ex-

ercising, he always rode the mare for preference and led the gray. She was honest and she was kind, with the heart of a woman and the manners of a lady. Yet except for a general air of breeding I do not think you would have singled her out in a crowd.

Kitty came first into the Major's stable when after a long spell at the War Office he went back to regimental work and took over the command of a Field Battery. I think he picked her out of the ranks: maybe the trumpeter had been riding her.

In that stable other horses came and went. The mare stayed; and her reputation grew.

At the big Aldershot meeting the Major entered her for the Artillery Point-to-point. He was never hard on his horses, and didn't ride her out. She was not placed. Afterwards he heard the whole Brigade had been backing her.

When the Major got his Jacket and took command of the Black Horse Battery at the Wood, Humbleton and the mare went with him. She was not black: she was brown. Therefore he could not ride her on ceremonial parades as his first charger. So he bought a sporting little black horse with a short back,

Dandy by name, on which he rode with nodding plume at the head of his Troop down Park Lane, across Piccadilly and the Mall, to fire salutes on Horse Guards Parade.

But if she was no longer his first charger she was still first in his heart; and for long days on Salisbury Plain during autumn manœuvres she had not her equal.

There followed three quiet years of preparation, the Black Horse Battery doing the Musical Drive at Olympia, swirling at the gallop in rhythmic figures interlaced about the famous bronze Gundamuck gun which the Troop had lost when covering the retreat from Cabul in the first Afghan War and recovered forty years later in the second. The Battery drove to the admiration of connoisseurs, artists, and the London crowd; and then would march down to Salisbury Plain to break records there in the mimic business of war.

Then came the reality; and the Major had to make the sacrifice of his life, and break up in a moment the fighting unit which through three laborious years he had trained to the point of perfection. Immediately on mobilization he was called upon to send all his horses, all his

men, and half his officers to complete the strength of a first-for-service Battery at Aldershot. He stood with folded arms on the barrack-square and watched his famous black teams, shining in the sun, and beloved of Londoners, file out of the gate. The subalterns said they thought the Major's heart would break. It was perhaps a little comfort to him that when horses and men arrived at Aldershot the Major of the first-for-service Battery there asked his own gun-team drivers to give place to the newcomers.

"These are the drivers of the Black Horse Troop," he said.

The only men left the Major were Humbleton and his batman; the only horses Dandy and the mare. For the rest he had his guns; his non-commissioned officers; a couple of subalterns, reservists, and the pick of all the horses that were streaming into London with which to build up a new Battery.

II

He had two months in which to do it; and he did it.

In those days there was no tarrying. The Germans were knocking at the Gates of Calais.

At the beginning of October the Black Horse Battery, its horses no longer black, many-coloured, many-cornered, but a hard and handy crowd, disembarked at Zeebrugge with the Seventh Division in the romantic and desperate endeavour to relieve Antwerp; and the officers of the Guards Brigade to which the Battery was attached muttered among themselves that if it was no longer the Battery of Olympia days it was still the best Horse Battery in England.

Antwerp fell the day they landed. The Immortal Division, 20,000 strong, marched out to meet the enemy much as David went to meet Goliath. In a perilously thin-drawn-out line it flung itself across the path of the German herds driving bull-headed, hundred thousands of them, for the sea and the island that lay across the Channel.

General French sent word to the valiant Division that he would reinforce them in five hours. Those reinforcements took five days to come. But the Division held; though at the

end of the stress it had but forty officers left out of the four hundred who had disembarked at Zeebrugge six weeks before.

In those tremendous days the Black Horse Battery played its fiery part in support of the First Battalion of the Grenadier Guards. Tried in that white-hot furnace, Guardsmen and Gunners proved worthy of each other and of the traditions of their great regiments. There was no rest by night or day for officers, men, or horses.

Kitty, the mare, took it all very calmly. Back with the limbers, on the sheltered side of the ridge on which the guns were barking, she stretched her long neck, bowed a knee, and grazed the Flemish turf at ease much as on Salisbury Plain. The hubbub across the ridge, her master's fierce peremptory voice, the occasional burst of shrapnel near by, disturbed her little.

Now and then the trumpeter, handing over the mare and his own horse to the care of Humbleton, would crawl to the top of the ridge and watch the Battery in action beyond, pounding away at the grey-coats struggling in the valley. He didn't see much: for the guns

were roughly dug in. But once he saw a farmhouse which the Major was using for observation post crash down in headlong ruin.

"Gosh!" muttered the trumpeter. "Spotted 'im. He's done."

Then the long, lean Major came running out of the dust and débris.

The trumpeter returned at the trot to his horses.

"Old man ain't 'alf nippy," he reported to Humbleton.

"He ain't so old neether, then," answered Humbleton, who took no liberties with his master himself, and allowed none.

"Ain't he, then?" retorted the trumpeter who must have the last word even in the mouth of Hell. "I'll lay he's older than he were twenty year ago, then."

Once on that last desperate day, when the one skeleton Cavalry Brigade held in reserve was dashing here and there to make good as best it might gaps in the broken line, the Major got his guns up under a wall to cover the Guards' counter-attack launched as a forlorn hope. The Germans saw him and swept the wall away with a tidal wave of fire.

It was *Rear limber up!* and the gun-teams came up at the gallop.

In the hubbub and tumult of shells, shouts, of gunners furiously handling gun-wheels, of drivers with outstretched whip-hands quieting their teams, of bloody men disengaging bloody and floundering horses, Kitty, the mare, was steady as a rock.

"Got her, sir?" gasped the trumpeter, as he toppled off his own horse.

"Right," said the Major, toe in his stirrup, and swung into his saddle. *"Battery column, gallop!"*

And somehow or other the Battery swung clear.

Those were astounding days. For three weeks the officers and men of that Battery never had their clothes off, and for days together the horses were never unharnessed. But whoever else went short Kitty, the mare, never suffered. Humbleton saw to that, and to be just the mare saw to herself in her large and sensible way, grazing when opportunity offered, and snatching *bonne bouches* from ruined haystacks.

After the first terrible six weeks the Armies

settled down to trench warfare. It was not the game for Horse Artillery; but the Black Horse Battery played it with zest all through that first winter.

The horses stood out in the open and thrived. Kitty grew a coat like a bear's; and the saddle sank into her back as into a drift of brown snow. But campaigning suited her as it did her black companion Dandy.

Then came promotion.

The Major, now a Brevet-Lieutenant-Colonel, took command of a Field Artillery Brigade. That did not last for long. Within a few weeks he and Humbleton and the two horses were back with the Horse Artillery, the Colonel now commanding a Brigade.

III

The Headquarters of the Brigade was in a château some thirty miles behind the firing line.

When the turn of the Cavalry Division, to which the Brigade was attached, came for a spell in the trenches, horses and guns made a long forced march by night and took up their positions early in December of the second winter of the War.

They had three months in the trenches—months of sleet and rain, of dogged endurance, infinitely dull, varied by lurid nightmare interludes.

When towards the end of February they were relieved nobody in the Division regretted it.

That was the time of the heavy snows; and all reliefs were made of necessity at night.

The Horse Artillery started for the thirty-mile trek home at midnight, the long thin line of guns, their wheels thick with snow, trailing worm-like through the white dimness that muffled the noise of their going and made the procession strangely ghost-like.

Wagons and kits were to follow later.

The Colonel gave his Brigade an hour's start.

It was just one when his batman came to the door of his much-shelled lodging and announced that Humbleton and the horses were outside.

The Colonel, busy destroying papers, went to the door, accompanied by his terrier Bruiser. The little groom, in his goat-skin coat, stood outside in the snow, the horses in hand. Dandy

stretched a neck to greet his little friend, the terrier, standing three-legged, and shivering in the snow, while the mare nibbled tentatively at a pile of wood close by.

"Don't let her eat that!" ordered the Colonel ferociously.

He always spoke to his servants as if they were his mortal enemies and he wished them to know he knew it. And they took more from him than they would have done from many a man with a smoother tongue and a smaller heart. It was just the old man's way, they said among themselves. And he had the qualities which ensured respect if they did not win love. He was just, consistent, and in the heart of him considerate. So, to the surprise of many, they always stuck to him.

The Colonel went back to his room with Bruiser, and piled on layer upon layer of clothes: sweaters, hunting-waistcoats, Norfolk jackets, towards the top a suit of oilskins, and over all a Burberry.

In multitudinous pockets he stuffed an electric torch, a flask, a thermos, a map, a ball of string, an extra pair of gloves, a muffler, and other odds and ends. The lean Colonel, now

a very portly man, gave certain curt instructions to his batman, tied Bruiser, who was to follow with the kits, to the leg of the table, and mounted Dandy: for he knew of old that the mare was not clever in the snow.

Then he set off into the night, Humbleton and the mare following in his wake.

Once clear of the village the Colonel looked round. In that little distance he had already gained greatly on the other pair.

He waved for the groom to come up alongside.

"Leg her up," he ordered gruffly. "Keep her alongside me."

Side by side master and man rode along through the night, the snow coating them heavily.

"She's walking abominably," said the Colonel.

"Yes, sir," answered Humbleton, who never wasted words, least of all on his master.

Laboriously the Colonel disengaged his electric torch and flashed it on the mare.

What he saw he didn't like.

The snow was heavy on her shoulders, thick in her ears, plastering her heavy coat; and she

was slouching along disconsolately, her head down, as though smelling out a track.

It's that wood's poisoned her, thought the Colonel; but he didn't say anything.

"Does she feel all right?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," answered Humbleton.

Twelve miles out they stopped at a little *estaminet* for a water and feed.

Dandy tucked into his nose-bag greedily. The mare would not look at hers.

"Come on, missus," said Humbleton.

He warmed some water, making a weak gruel, sprinkled bran on the top, and held the bucket to her nostrils temptingly.

She breathed on it, her breath mingling with the steam, but would not touch it.

The Colonel walked round her with anxious eyes, pulled her ears, hand-rubbed her cold pasterns.

It's that wood, he thought.

Then he rummaged in his multitudinous pockets. After long search he produced a thermometer and took her temperature.

It was 108; and there was still a twenty-mile march before them.

He got her a ball and gave it her.

There was no stabling at the *estaminet;* and nothing for it therefore but to go on.

He swung into his saddle again.

The track lay before them invisible save for the half-obliterated furroughs left by the gun-wheels. The snow came waving across them in white curtains that almost seemed to lighten the darkness. The moustaches of both men froze and were thatched with snow. The two white-cloaked figures laboured along side by side like two phantom horsemen with feet of lead.

The mare seemed to come on a little better.

Every now and then the Colonel said—

"How's she feel now?"

And Humbleton answered—

"Very queer, sir."

At length they came to the foot of a long bare ridge, stretching interminably before them, smooth and bleak and white as a shroud, great curtains of snow flapping dismally across its desolate face.

The mare stopped.

Both men dismounted. The Colonel with a hoof-picker, disengaged with difficulty from

a remote interior pocket, emptied her hoofs of the balling snow.

He thought she was going to lie down; and once she lay down on that slope he knew he would never get her up again.

He and Humbleton, crouching in the snow, hand-rubbed her legs and flanks. Then they started leading her up the slope.

The two men were wonderfully kind and patient with the suffering creature; far more kind and patient with her than with each other.

The forlorn little group toiled desolately up the slope, now engulfed in a billow of waving white, now emerging into blotted dimness, the wind rollicking away with terrible laughter in the valley below. The horses, with windy tails tucked-in and strewn about their flanks, plodded on with downward heads, shaking the snow from their ears like big dogs with a rattle of accoutrements that sounded weirdly in the night.

Honest and kind as always, the mare was doing her dumb best; and both men knew it. One on either side, they shouldered her up the slope, easing her, halting her, talking to her,

coaxing her on a step at a time, as a nurse teaching a child to walk. And every now and then she rubbed her snowy head against one man or the other, as though recognizing their love, and wishing to tell them about it.

Somehow or other they bolstered her up to the top of that Ridge of Windy Death.

Down in the valley, on the other side, the Colonel hoped he might find a Cavalry Division, and some shelter for the mare.

He was right.

As they descended the slope, the mare walking more easily, they found themselves among friends.

The Gunners were in possession of the valley.

Officers and men with lanterns came to the rescue. Most of them knew the Colonel; many of them the mare. A veterinary surgeon was found and pulled out of his bed. The mare was given a roomy box in a farm. She revived somewhat. Willing hands bedded her down in bracken. Humbleton set to work to warm and dry her. The Colonel took her temperature and found it less.

The light was just stealing over the white-

bosomed hills and snow-thatched roofs when he swung into the saddle to ride the last long stage to his Headquarters alone.

The mare was playing with some hay, and Humbleton was rugging her up, as he left her.

IV

All that day he was busy, and no news came through; but a horse of his Orderly Officer died partly from exposure and partly from eating wood, the vet. said.

Next morning early the Colonel rode off to the valley where the mare was to see how things were going.

As he rode up to the yard of the farm, Humbleton, looking in his goat-skin like a little clean-shaven Robinson Crusoe, came ploughing through the snow to meet him.

He looked very dogged and did not catch the Colonel's eye.

"Well?" said the Colonel.

"Mare's dead, sir," answered the little man.

"Indeed!" said the Colonel rudely. "What time?"

"Two o'clock this morning."

The Colonel said nothing and dismounted.

Heavily he walked through the slush of the farmyard towards the loose-box and entered.

Honest and kind in death as in life, the brown mare lay on her side, rough of coat, her long flat neck stretched out, her long thin legs slightly crooked, her shoes upturned and shining, looking strangely pathetic.

Over her head Humbleton had scrawled in chalk upon a beam:

KITTY:
Died for her country,
1 *March,* 1916.

The Colonel stood above her.

He was glad she had such a thick bed of bracken to rest upon.

Then he bent and felt her heart.

One of those strange and overwhelming waves of emotion, of which we cannot trace the origin, came surging up out of the inland ocean of his being and choked him.

He kicked the bracken about with his feet, and blew his nose.

Then he said—

"We shall miss her, Humbleton."

The little groom, standing in his goat-skin jacket in the door, his back towards his master, looked out over the snow and answered nothing.

THE INVASION OF ENGLAND

MISTY, toiling, mute, she was much as we had left her, in outward seeming at all events, as we made our way up the Mersey between crowded banks on that chill October morning. But for the fact that a sentry with a rifle and fixed bayonet paced the wharf, you would never have known that England was engaged in a life-and-death struggle such as she has not known for a hundred years.

And the same held good as we travelled south. There were a few more men in khaki about the stations, a few more tents beside the line, a few strange placards on the hoardings: for the rest, battered men ploughed behind steaming horses under dank and dripping woodlands as of old; coveys of partridges whirred away over purpling hedges; and warm old farms, warmer and older surely than any others in the world, seemed to sleep as they had slept for centuries.

At Stafford we left the train to spend the night with a friend in a village hard by; and here we came on the first signs of the Invasion.

Our friend had an empty cottage in her garden, and was preparing it for the invaders. That morning had brought her a telephone message from the organizing Secretary of the Central Committee at Birmingham, saying—

"Several crowds of refugees arrived. Am sending you some."

The message was vague and of a character to have crushed the spirit of one less valiant than our friend. Nothing daunted, she had sallied down at once into the village, and asked for what she needed. One had given a mattress, another a chair, a third had offered two eggs a day for a month. One man would meet the refugees at the station with a truck, another would supply vegetables from his allotment: all were helping in their humble way. That day the promised refugees did not arrive. Next morning our friend went into Birmingham and made her way to the Central Receiving Hall. There were refugees in their hundreds, waiting for hosts to claim them. She

wandered up and down amongst them much as of old a Roman matron may have wandered up and down the slave-market of her imperial city. A nursing mother with a swarm of little children ran after her, begging to be taken.

"I've nothing but a poor little cottage to offer you," our friend had said.

"O, madame!" the poor woman had replied. "Anywhere where I can be alone with my children and see to them properly. We have lived in herds for weeks."

That was her cry; and it is the cry of millions more in Western Europe to-day.

Indeed, the first thing you hear on your return to England is that cry raised on every side; the first thing you see is this stream of helpless, homeless exiles driven forth from their farms and cottages and peaceful towns before this tornado of death and destruction that has swept their innocent land.

When I reached London and went down to that poor quarter of the town where of old I lived and worked I found the same story.

"How are things going?" I asked the stewardess, as I entered the bar-parlour of our Club for Working-men.

"Very slack, sir," she answered. "We've over forty of our members at the War. It's all Belgian Refugees now."

As I walked down the alley I saw that the house we had been fitting up in July last as a Girls' Club had been rechristened *Maison Belge*. Strange, dark peasant women leaned out of the windows; strange children of strange speech played in the garden.

At twelve hours' notice that little house had been fitted up to receive refugees toward the end of August. The call came late one night. The neighbours rushed to the rescue. Mattresses, pots and pans, tables and chairs, came pouring in from the houses of rich and poor. And after them came the vanquished of Liège: women and girls, old men, boys, and children. They had lost everything but each other. One woman had seen two of her children scattered to death by a shell before her eyes; another sat down and wept for endless hours when first she found the shelter of those blank but kindly walls.

"I thought she'd never have done, poor lamb," said a sympathetic neighbour.

Others did not know where their husbands,

fathers, brothers, sons might be. All had their story: most had little more.

Since *Maison Belge* was established thousands from all over London have trooped to see the children with their hands and feet cut off, their eyes gouged out, by the Prussian soldiers—and have been sent away disappointed. As though anything imaginable of man could exceed the horror of the thing consummated! —a country razed; swept as by fire of houses, human beings, stock; the patient toil of generations thrown on the rubbish-heap of Time; men maimed, women dying uncared for in childbirth, girls shooting themselves, children lost and starving to death in woods and desolate rat-haunted barns—and all innocent, as even their persecutors admit, of any crime.

"Ce sont des braves gens, les Allemands!" said a noble girl I found busy at her lace-work in an upper room at the Club; and she said it with an irony so gentle that at first I did not detect the terrible quality of it.

She herself and a crowd of others had been locked into a church for two days—"sans nourriture."

Then they had burst out and made for the

ships and the sea—men and women and children, a trembling mass of fugitives driven before this tidal wave of cruelty and brutality and death; many of them spending days in open boats on the terrible waters that were still kinder than Prussian steel.

It was such an expulsion as not even the Edict of Nantes had caused.

And that is how England has come to be invaded. And her invaders are everywhere. Belgian girls are selling Belgian papers on the curb within a stone's-throw of Charing Cross. Not a street in London but out of one or more houses hang the black and red and yellow of the Belgian flag. In the streets, at the stations, emerging from the houses of the rich, and issuing from the mews and alleys where dwell the poor, are strange-faced men, with strange-cut beards, in strange hats, who talk a strange tongue, and solid simple peasant women, unlike our own, their neat black shawls about their heads.

And the stories of these invaders as you hear them on buss or car are pitiful enough.

A Saturday or two ago I was at Waterloo

Station. Two men stood outside the door of a carriage I was about to enter. One of them, an obvious Englishman, asked me if I was going down to Weybridge. I answered yes. He asked me if I would see his friend, a Belgian, out at the station.

"He speaks no English," he said. "He was a customer of ours in Brussels."

The Belgian and I entered. He was a comfortable bourgeois, sleek, clean-shaven, immaculately dressed, admirably fed. Every great city of the Western world possesses thousands of such citizens, self-respecting, prosperous, middle-aged, who go down to their offices in the city every morning and return to their villa in the suburbs every evening.

He, it seemed, was a wholesale druggist. For thirty years he had been trading in Brussels and had done well; growing gradually and without offence in his own eyes and those of his neighbours. His bank account had expanded year by year, and so had his waistcoat. Industrious, innocuous; loving his friends and clients well, not hating his competitors unduly; what he lacked in vision made up for by benevolence; as good as most of us, and better

perhaps than some; he had passed quietly into affluent middle-age. He was not married—perhaps he had been too selfish: he lived with his two sisters and a brother instead—perhaps because it was his duty. He had bought house-property—seven houses in all; and laid by money. He loved his little comforts, and his habits were dear to him. Every Sunday he took his stroll about the town and eyed with comfortable assurance the houses that meant for him ease and well-being in his old age.

On the 30th of July last there had been few happier men on earth than my well-lined friend. A week later this plump man, who had never known hardship, to whom his coffee after dinner was so dear, and his hot-water-bottle in bed of winter evenings almost a necessity, was a wanderer on the face of the earth.

"C'est dur, Monsieur. C'est dur," he said, and the tears coursed down his cheeks.

I was at my wit's end to know how to comfort him.

True he was mainly concerned about himself; but if his view was not exalted it was touchingly human.

He asked me how long I thought the War would last. Somehow he had managed to get hold of 1,200 francs before he fled, he and his sisters and his brother.

If the war lasted no more than six months his little store would see him and his through—at 7 francs a day the four.

"Ce n'est pas beaucoup, Monsieur, pour quatre!"

If it lasted more, one year, two years—Ah!—

He shrugged his stout shoulders.

"I do not tell my sisters," he said. "Such things are not for women."

"You've got us behind you," I ventured lamely. "England—the world."

"Ah, yes, Monsieur," he admitted. "But to be dependent—to live on charity! Ah, c'est terrible—*terrible.*" And he was crying once again.

In the days of his prosperity, it seemed, he had bought his drugs, some in England, some in Germany.

Did I think he would ever buy of Germany again? He clicked his thumb-nail against

his front-teeth, making a vicious snapping noise.

"Jamais! Jamais! Jamais!"

That fat man who had never hated in his life hated now.

And it is not only by women and children, the old and the invalid, that England has been invaded to-day.

Everywhere in the grey bustle of the streets, amid the flaming glory of autumn woods, in great thoroughfares and country lanes, you are surprised by men—in their prime, singly or in groups, wearing a blue uniform strange to our eyes; some of them limping, some with arms in slings, some with bandaged heads; and not a few, especially among the younger men, with faces so purged by suffering that the dross of human nature has been swept away leaving the pure gold of the spirit. They creep on crutches in and out of extemporized hospitals; they sun themselves on the seats of country houses turned into convalescent homes. And wherever we meet one such, be he a humble private of the line hobbling along, or a staff officer dashing by in an automobile lent him

by a wealthy host, our instinct is to raise our hats to the representative of the land that has flung itself in desperate valour across the path of the hordes whose goal was the city from which I write.

THE BOMBARDMENT; AND A BOY

SUDDENLY in the grey December afternoon, as we slid along the street, those astonishing newspaper placards shot out at us:

EAST COAST TOWNS BOMBARDED.

Leaning forward in the taxi, I pointed them out to the Woman.

"What about Frog?" was her immediate inquiry.

Frog was her nephew; and Frog was at school on the East Coast—at Scarborough.

"It's probably Yarmouth again," I said; and my words were not entirely disinterested.

At the beginning of the War I had made a solemn resolution to buy one paper in the morning and one at night—and no more; and so far, in spite of manifold temptations, I had kept to my resolve. The evening paper is bought after dinner at 8.15 precisely. At

8.18 I rise from my dinner, fumble in the box in the lobby for the latch-key, sally out, wet or fine, cross the greasy road, and at the little shop in the side-street where they sell sweets and papers spend a penny.

And it was now 8.30.

"Don't you think you could get an evening paper early this once?" suggested my wife, who was an Aunt as well.

"I hate departing from my principles," I said with marked acridity, and gripped the copper in my pocket with tenacious fist.

A habit once established is dear to me as life.

But the man on the lift could afford a newspaper, it seemed, if I could not.

"Any news?" I asked innocently, as we ascended to our flat.

"Yes, sir," he answered. "Scarborough in ruins!—Something shocking."

It was too much for me. The thought of that sturdy blue-eyed urchin of ten, with his plume of fair hair, and his wonderful air of integrity, whom I had last seen on the lawn courted by the bridesmaids in that remote village of Bucks on the glorious August morning

I took the Woman to be my wife, overwhelmed me.

Self-respect forbade me to offer to buy the porter's halfpenny paper second-hand. So I threw my principles and my penny alike to the winds, and descending in the lift spent far more than I could afford on the nearest paper.

There was little in it but that cool, curt announcement from the Admiralty:

Between 8 and 9 this morning Scarborough, Whitby, and the Hartlepools were bombarded by an enemy squadron.

The situation is developing.

I was not unduly concerned for Scarborough, Whitby, or the Hartlepools. The bombardment was an incident in the War—a pin-prick; not unexpected; the somewhat spiteful retort to the destruction of the German Pacific Squadron. One met the incident much as one would meet the jeers of a street-boy. In my heart I was not even greatly concerned about Frog. Scarborough might be in ruins, as the porter averred; but I had a clear vision of Master Frog sauntering about amid those ruins on those pillar-like little legs of his, full of aplomb, both hands deep in his pockets, a

very big bull's-eye plugging his cheek, as he blunted the toes of his boots against the broken concrete.

But I was the husband of the Aunt of Frog; and Frog's mother and my wife were singular and intimate allies; and Frog's mother was in London.

We speculated with interest on the action she would take.

"I bet old Edie got the funks and wired for him to come home," said the Woman, who was not above criticism of her friend.

"She'd hardly be such an ass, surely," I remarked. "What would be the good when it was all over? Besides, it was in the middle of term."

"There's only one Frog," said his Aunt sagaciously. "And term's nearly over."

"If she did take him away, Frog will never forgive her," I muttered.

I knew Frog.

He was a typical little Anglo-Saxon—sturdy, dogged, unimaginative; combining already in his small person that passion for religion and sport which is still the characteristic of the men of his country and his class. It was

known that he was already in his football eleven; and it was whispered in the family that he had started an Anti-swearing League at school.

"I expect Edie'll come round this evening," said the Woman.

But she did not.

And the next morning brought nothing but a postcard from another Aunt.

Where is Frog?

It was not till the evening that the question was answered.

Then the door opened quietly, and a small and merry boy grinned in it, his stately mother towering behind.

"Who's the coward?" came yells from the sofa and the arm-chair at once.

"Not me!" piped Frog, already in his Aunt's arms.

"It's mother!" came the mocking voice from the sofa. "I know her. Edie!"

"No; it's not!" The rich voice of the mother blended with the shrill treble of the boy. "It's Booth."

Booth was Frog's schoolmaster.

"Of course they put it on the absent one!"

jeered the mocker. "Now, Frog! let's hear all about it."

The boy sat solidly down, his merry face rippling smiles. His legs were so short that his feet were off the floor, and he swung them, as he gave us his first experience of war.

"Well, we were at breakfast when it began!" he chirped.

"Did you know what it was?"

"Rather! We knew at once. Only Mr. Bagshaw tried to make out it was the Fleet practising. But of course we knew it wasn't."

He laughed gaily at the ineffectual wile of the young master.

"How did you know?"

"Because of the noise."

"What was it like?"

He did not answer at once, and became suddenly grave. This was the thing that had most impressed his impressionable boyish mind. All else might pass. *That* would remain—the noise! the noise!

"Why, it was like nothing else you ever heard. It was awful—and the smell!"

There was a moment's pause. Then the cross-examination continued.

"Was the school struck by shells?"

"No; but the house next door was—a lot of times."

We seemed to see it all; the bare gas-lit hall of the school; the boys sitting round the long tables in the dim December morning, opening their mothers' letters; the matron, rather cross, serving out the porridge; the maids, rather sleepy, handing it round; the young master in his pince-nez feeling his unshaven chin, and wishing he'd had time to shave—and suddenly all about them legions of screaming devils swooping out of the sea; tornadoes of terrifying noise; a stench as of a pestilence; the abomination of desolation abroad on every hand.

Noise and stench!—stench and noise!—and again noise and stench!

"What happened?"

"We took our bread-and-butter and went down into the cellar and finished our breakfast there," chirped the embryo Englishman.

"Was anybody afraid?"

"Shaw and Jackson were a bit funky. Shaw's the son of an Admiral." Frog seemed to think that in some mysterious way the occupation of the father explained and justified

the conduct of the son. "His mother always said he would be," he added, by way of confirmation.

They gathered in the dimness of the cellar, listening to the shrieking horror outside. Some munched their bread-and-butter, and pretended they did not mind. Some teased the frightened maids; some comforted them. The young master, a trifle flustered, but determined to do his duty and keep his charges calm, continued to babble about the Fleet. The bolder spirits climbed to the grating and peeped out—to be driven back by that abominable stench. And Shaw and Jackson whimpered a little in the corner, to a chorus of brutal "O, shut ups!" from unfeeling comrades.

Houses were crashing down on every side of them.

"What happened next?"

"Why, Mr. Booth said, 'I think we'll go for a walk on the golf-links.' So we all went out to the golf-links, where there are two hills. And we stood between them for about an hour. And then we went back. And that was all."

It was all; but it was enough for the present—so, apparently, thought Mr. Booth.

He packed all the boys home by the next train, sending their trunks after them.

Most of them carried with them a memory of a noise and stench that will never leave them; and some a more material trophy of the bombardment.

"Frog had a bit of shell," said his mother.

"I haven't got it now," chimed in Frog.

"What happened to it?" asked the Woman in her swift way.

"I swopped it for five bob!"

"Frog!" cried his indignant Aunt.

"Well, you see, I had another bit," said Frog apologetically.

"And what happened to that?"

"I lost it in the train."

It was so human and above all so schoolboyish that we forgave him with laughter that somehow did not seem out of place.

But he ended his narrative with a little unconscious touch that brought us back to the realities.

"One fellow got a letter that was covered with blood."

And we remembered that a postman on his rounds, standing talking at the door to a maid

to whom he was delivering the letters, had had his head blown off; and the bag, packed with messages of peace, and goodwill from all over the earth, had been soaked with the blood of an innocent man, shed deliberately to testify that Hate still ruled the world.

A strange Christmas!

A strange Christmas story, with its gleams of laughter and underlying sense of tragedy!

Frog's grandchildren will love him to tell it them. And to tease the old man, they will press to know what happened to the bit of shell.

Then grandfather will confess with shame, bowing his white head. And the children will all stand round him in their smocks, with bare legs and very round eyes, and chirrup with one accord—

"O grandfather!"

THE MIND OF AN EMPIRE

IT is said that we Anglo-Saxons take our pleasures sadly; and there is truth in the saying. It might be added with equal truth that we take our sorrows with a peculiar kind of flippancy that only those who understand us can perhaps appreciate.

England has never been so spiritual as during the last two or three decades. In all her lengthy history she has never been so earnest or so united as she is about the business she has to-day in hand.

Yet it is to a music-hall song that her young men have been pouring in their thousands to strew the Marches of Flanders with their willing bodies; hurrying from the quadrangles of ancient public-schools, and the courts of still more ancient Universities; trooping from office, from factory, from counter, and from mill to trenches filled with icy water, to prisons, privations, wounds unspeakable, and death.

It's a long way to Tipperary,
It's a long, long way to go,
It's a long way to Tipperary,
To the sweetest girl I know,

is being sung by men not light in spirit nor poor in intellectual equipment, but men who know what they are fighting for as truly as did those troopers of Cromwell who in the dawn before Dunbar chaunted tremendously—

The Lord of Hosts my Shepherd is.

Fifty years ago men of the same stock were flocking to another standard, to uphold the same ideal, singing in much the same spirit—

We are coming, Father Abraham,
We are coming, millions strong.

Our men sing their battle-song as yours sang theirs—with an apparent carelessness that serves as a mask to disguise the real spiritual fervour behind.

We who stay at home and wait do not sing it. Indeed, we do not sing at all. The horror is always with us; and the ache that knows no end. We who wait feel it as those who fight do not—let us be thankful for it. It is our

small share of the universal burthen, never for a moment to be laid aside.

At night that great ghastly white arm which sweeps over London, taps at your window, feeling the darkness, searching the uttermost parts of the heavens with probing fingers to find, if it may, its enemy amid the stars, to grapple with him there, and bring him hurling down to earth, will not allow us to forget. And all day, as you go down the street, WAR, with all its terrible associations deep-seated in the memory of the race, is shouted at you from a hundred sides: the recruiting posters on the wall; the endless tramp of the brown battalions; the horses picketed in the Parks; the voice of the drill-sergeant ringing in squares and courtyards long after the few rare lamps which sentinel our streets have been lit; the ragged urchins in paper cocked hats marching in the gutter banging on empty biscuit tins; and, by no means least, those long, grey deadly armoured cars stealing through the misty streets, like squadrons of destroyers, whence no man knows, whither none can say, the lean guns snarling through the shields, one look-out man aloft, and in the shield under the gun a long

slit, through which you see a row of eyes; while behind the cars in ordered clouds, scurrying along bent over their motor-bicycles, come the remainder of the guns' crews. Devilish in their possibilities; beautiful in their speed and power with a terrible beauty that makes you shudder while you must admire.

Certainly Florence itself at the height of the Renaissance was not fuller of significance than is London to-day. The red-cross flags flap overhead; the Roll of Honour daily lengthens in your Club; the young widows with the shining eyes, peering out of their black habiliments, startle you as they spring on you out of the fog; and a soldier with a limp hobbles down the street before you, carrying by its knob the black *Pickelhaube* of the Prussian he slew at the parapet of his trench.

The Hun is at the gate!

And never for one moment may man, woman, or child forget it.

Things great and small remind us continually of his presence in our midst.

Tom cannot come to lunch because he is manning the anti-aircraft gun on the top of a

Government building from 8 A. M. to 2 P. M. every day.

And very funny Tom looks, his sister reports, with a delicious little giggle, in his coarse blue uniform that makes people at the station mistake him for a porter—Tom of all men; Tom of the Bachelors' Club who till July was certainly one of the three best-dressed men in London.

Margaret has not been seen for months because she has been serving as a probationer in the great house in her village which has been turned, at the owner's wish, into a hospital; and the ball-room is now a ward—the ball-room in which last July she danced with young Forbes of the Scots Guards, who sleeps his last sleep on a steep hillside Ypres-way, with his face to Berlin and his back to Calais.

And unroarious old Pongo's sword has come home quietly—with a label attached. The General, we are told, is riding Dorothy, the rat-tailed bay; while Lamplighter, the chestnut, got cut to pieces over a barbed-wire entanglement. Anyway, dear Pongo will not need the horses he loved any more.

Harry, too, has disappeared from society,

not because he has committed a crime, but because he is a Special Constable on duty every other day from 2 A. M. to 6 A. M., and therefore has to sleep during the day. While Bob, the man of peace, who in spite of his forty-five years preserves the innocent blue eye and merry, bird-like air of the boy of ten, Bob, who spends all his days lecturing on Bankruptcy in London University, passes laborious evening hours, that of old he hoarded jealously for his wife and little daughters, in a company of others like unto himself, in a dingy courtyard, forming platoon, turning right, advancing column, and being asked by a Sergeant-Major in a voice of thunder what the 'ell he thinks he's playing at.

It is such a Christmas as none of us have known, and such as our children will never know. And that is the thought which comforts, which strengthens, which abides.

It is all worth while—the sufferings, the suspense, the bereavements—if the shadow of the horror that has hung over the earth so long can be lifted for ever from the hearts of men.

With malice towards none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the

right—let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and orphan; to do all which may achieve and cherish a lasting peace.

The spirit voiced by Abraham Lincoln is the spirit of England to-day.

We are striving on to finish the work we are in. The

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God

is calling us at least as insistently as she called our fathers in Wordsworth's time.

And we are hearkening to her call—let us say it in all thankfulness and humility.

A month back I attended a wedding. In ordinary times it would have been fashionable. Now it was quiet. The father of the bride had snatched a few hours' leave from commanding his regiment on the East Coast to attend; and the best man, also in khaki, was enabled to be present because he had been shot through the mouth during the retreat from Mons.

"I've got my new teeth in to-day," he said. "I feel as if I'd a portmanteau in my mouth."

Next day he was to join the Special Reserve

Battalion, and expected to return to the front in a month.

On New Year's Day he went—not joyfully, but because he had to.

"It's a beastly business," he said. "But we've got to see it through."

And that is the attitude of all these humble men of war who have the work in hand.

Indeed, there is no swagger about our soldiers of to-day: Ancient Pistol died long ago. There is no rhodomontade about glory; no affectation of recklessness. Sincerity is the keynote of the hour and the nation—the sincerity that comes from a spiritual awakening, itself the result of contact with reality. And it has affected us throughout: women as well as men, girls and boys alike.

"Everybody's natural now," said a girl the other day. "We've all dropped our frills. It's such a comfort."

Since the overthrow of the Prussian Guard on the banks of the Yser somewhere about mid-November last year * every British officer and

* Written in 1915.

man who could be spared has been sent home on seventy-two hours' leave.

And they have made a deep impression on us all, these returning veterans. They were so quiet and so determined; never doubting the result; somewhat astonished at the frame of mind of those at home.

"Why are you all so depressed here?" said a staff-officer recently returned.

We are not in fact depressed; but we have not been living on the spiritual heights of those men who have been fighting up to their throats in mud in Flanders, the odds 8 to 1 against them for most of a month, as the record of the 7th Division shows—the 7th Division which, landing early in October, had 40 officers left out of the original 400 six weeks later.

In the British Service officers and men have always been very close: "We were a band of brothers," wrote Nelson of his comrades of the Nile; but surely they have never been so close as in this last great testing time. And I am not sure which is the more delightful—to hear the officers gossip about the men, or the men chat of their officers.

A corporal, lying wounded in a London hospital, yesterday told a friend a little tale illustrative of the point. He was on outpost duty, and was short of a man for sentry.

A staff-officer, passing, asked him what was the matter.

"I've four posts, sir; and only three men in my relief," the corporal explained.

"I'll take a turn," said the officer.

He shouldered a rifle and paced his beat for two hours.

"*Their* officers wouldn't have done that, I'll lay!" ended the corporal. His criticism of *their* officers may have been unjust, but served at least as a delightful tribute to his own.

Officers and men alike have returned to the Front now.

No one of them would have stayed this side the water if he could; no one of them returned to the trenches with joy—or pretended to.

It was necessity that drove: the need to rid the earth of a terror, to exterminate a false ideal that has throttled men and enslaved them for a thousand centuries, to bring an errant nation back to the paths of peace—lest govern-

ment of the people by the people for the people perish from the earth. For that ideal Americans gave their best yesterday and the day before; and Englishmen are giving theirs to-day.

"I felt like a schoolboy going back to the cane," wrote a friend, who has seen war in many lands, as he turned his back on London and set his face towards the sea again.

And you find the same thought expressed everywhere.

The modern man does not care for War for its own sake—once he has experienced it.

At Christmas we were staying in a country-house.

The old Colonel, whose fighting days are done, lay upstairs in a bed from which he will never rise, looking somewhat pathetic in a new-grown beard. His son, commanding now the Horse Artillery battery his father commanded twenty-five years ago, is in the trenches, his guns right up alongside the infantry, firing at 300 yards from what he elegantly describes as funk-pits. The old gardener, who was the Colonel's soldier-servant and followed him

over land and sea for thirty years, was somewhat depressed—partly because the Colonel would never prune the roses any more, and partly because he, being in his sixtieth year, could not get the Recruiting Officer to believe that he was under thirty-five. The chauffeur, another old soldier, twenty years the junior of the man with the spade, had rejoined; and a daughter of the house acted as coachman, driving daily an ancient cob into the town and out again.

We went down to see the wife of the gardener in the lodge.

One of her sons, a sergeant in the Artillery, had been home on his seventy-two hours' leave.

"Willie's gone back, sir," she said. "I don't think he wanted to go. He's a man of peace reelly, our Will is."

We are all that to-day—we of the countries west of the Rhine.

And that is why we are at war.

THE SHADOW

LONDON was in the grip of three epidemics—influenza, measles, and, not least, the War.

Each of the three made a heavy demand upon the nursing community; and when I went to the telephone and asked Dr. Muir if he could send a nurse, I was pleased when he answered in his curt Scotch way—

"Certainly. I'll send one round at once."

An hour later the maid announced that the nurse had come.

She proved a slight young woman with a deliciously rustic air; and she told me that she nursed only for Dr. Muir.

Then she disappeared into her room, to emerge again in a few moments white-aproned, in blue uniform, with a sensible cap without tails.

A more English girl it was impossible to conceive; with honest plain grey eyes, a scoop-nose, and that wonderful air of simplicity and

integrity that had first struck me. A creature more natural, sturdy, and honest, it would have been hard to find.

Nurse Merton was a Guernsey girl, it seemed, one of a family of seven. In her girlhood she had never dreamed of nursing heroes —indeed, she was altogether too practical to be very romantic; but when her father fell ill, in her sensible way she undertook the duty nearest to hand. After his death, when she found she had to provide for herself, she adopted without either reluctance or desire the profession in which she had now some little experience. She crossed the water, came to London, and joined a hospital; but through all her moving experiences in the great city she kept the stubborn prejudices and sound good sense of the country girl, adding to them of necessity something of the worldly wisdom and the judgment that comes from contact with all sorts of men in all kinds of conditions.

After she had earned her certificate, she had met Dr. Muir, who had asked her to nurse for him. And it was indirectly through the long Scotch doctor that the experience of her life had come.

In August and September Dr. Muir left London always for his holiday. At the end of July last a matron who was running a nursing home in Paris asked Nurse Merton if she would care to undertake a case out there, while her doctor was away. She had never seen Paris; had a poor opinion of the French, very poor, and went—on July 28th.

There was talk of war at the time; but then in Nurse Merton's twenty-six years' experience of life there was always talk of war; and she let 'em talk.

In the Paris home there were two or three nurses, one a young Scotch woman, attending some typhoid cases. Busy at her work, she didn't see much of Paris in those early days; and what she did see she didn't like.

The French women were not like English women; and they should have been.

They were got up!

On August 2nd, Germany declared war.

And in the twinkling of an eye Paris changed.

It became a city of women, who wept; and of men, who hurried off to the Front. The composed English nurse watched with critical

interest the frivolous capital in the first throes of its contact with reality.

It seemed to her a city balanced on a powder-barrel which might explode at any moment. The Parisians were furiously excited—and no wonder.

Above all they were panting for a row—a row at all costs. And there were rows—everywhere; small rows: black knots of people at every street-corner centring round a row. Nobody ever knew what the row was about. That didn't matter. It was a row; and it was well. People gathered all day and night in the streets, outside the shops, on their doorsteps, and watched the rows come to a head and dissipate again. In those days the beds of Paris knew no occupants. Men and women prowled about with fierce, terrible eyes. There were spies everywhere—and of course traitors. Even the milk of the children had been poisoned! Therefore every shop of every foreigner must be wrecked. *À bas les étrangers!* was the cry.

In those days you must speak French; and you must *look* French too—or *gare à vous!*

Those were terrible times for the foreigners; and especially for the English.

Were the English going to fight?

Were they going to betray their ally . . . once more?

And the general impression was that they were.

And if they did. . . .

Sacré cœur!

It was not pleasant to be an English girl in Paris in those first days.

Even unruffled Margaret Merton felt so much.

She and her Scotch colleague did not keep their rooms, however. They walked the streets discreetly and with downward eyes, seeing all, saying nothing, lest their speech should betray them.

The men had gone. Communications were difficult. Taxis and fiacres were being used for transport purposes. Trams and metros were few and uncertain, and run in the main by women. Food was at famine price, especially meat. The city was put on rations. No man or woman might buy more than a cer-

tain fixed amount. So the wealthier families sent out each member of the family, one by one, to buy the maximum permitted. Food was hoarded; prices rose; and there was no money.

Then the sister of the home summoned her staff, and told them they were free to go—unpaid. She could take no further responsibility for them.

Nurse Merton asked for her last week's salary.

"I haven't got it," said the sister.

"Can I have my fare back to England?—fifty-three francs."

"I've only twenty francs in the world," the sister answered. "You can't take the little I have. You've enough of your own to take you home."

It was true. And the same thing was happening throughout Paris. Dependents were being dismissed on every side—unpaid.

Nurse Merton went out to find the walls posted with a proclamation ordering all women to leave the town.

But the stubborn English girl would not admit defeat as yet.

She went to see the head of the British Red

Cross. He was somewhat amused with her sang-froid in the tumult.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"I want to go to the Front," she answered.

"Wait here twenty-four hours, and you'll be all right," came the grim reply.

"What do you mean?"

"The Front will be here to-morrow."

"In Paris?"

"All over it."

It was the general belief.

Nurse Merton was not dismayed. She went on to the American Ambulance, Lycée Pasteur.

Did they want nurses—for nothing?

Did they not!

Here at last was hope: here was help—to be given and received. The American Colony in Paris had been at work from the first. With limitless energy and enthusiasm they had set themselves to face an unprecedented situation. They might not fight for the cause in which they believed; but they might succour the men who were fighting in that cause.

They *must* have a hospital—of their own—and the best in Paris—at once.

Somehow they commandeered, leased, bought outright, begged, or borrowed a vast skeleton edifice that was in the process of building. The roof was on; the walls were up; and that was all. The very floors were not so much as down.

Into that gaunt hulk of a building those citizens of the country of Eternal Hope poured men and money. All through those August days they worked with deliberate fury. . . . The Germans are coming. . . . The Germans were there. . . . German aeroplanes were dropping bombs in the next street. . . . German guns could be heard outside the gates of Paris. . . . That didn't matter. Nothing mattered—except the turning of this hulk into a hospital.

And it was done at last. The skeleton began to be clothed with flesh. Floors were down; bathrooms built. An X-ray room was added, and an operating theatre with a sterilizer—such a sterilizer! Even a little diet-kitchen was not omitted.

Wards emerged out of the void—thirty-five beds to a ward, trim and comfortable, awaiting occupants. And in the wards American doc-

tors and American and English nurses worked, making ready.

They worked. While Liège and Namur fell; while the Expeditionary Force landed, and Belgium was drowned in blood; while the grey *Pickelhaubes* swept on to the walls of Paris, they worked.

Early in September they were ready—just in time. For the men from the Marne began trickling into Paris in dusty motor-ambulances that bore them straight from the field to the hospitals: Englishmen in khaki, crimson-trousered French, brown men of the desert, and black men from beyond.

Day and night they trickled in. The orderlies met them at the doors of the hospital and unshipped them from the ambulances. And the orderlies were English in the main—society men simple Nurse Merton thought: one of them even a baron; Club men, Piccadilly loafers who had never worked before. They worked now. All round the clock they worked; and it was real work—work for men. They received the wounded at the door and carried them in. Close to the door was a bathroom. There, if it was in any wise possible,

the orderlies bathed them. If they were past that they were carried straight on into the wards and laid down, bloody, grimy, torn, in their dusty brown uniforms or stained crimson trousers, on green tarpaulins that covered the beds and prevented the sheets being soiled.

And there all that the love and skill and care of Anglo-Saxon men and women could do was done.

At first the wounded came in all day and all night. Then Paris, always a city of moods, the woman among capitals, and a neurotic woman at that, began to get an attack of nerves.

There were so many—so many. . . .

Would they never cease?

C'est affreux!—effroyable!

Why was there War at all?

Who wanted War?

And after that the wounded came in by night only; the ambulances stealing down the darkened streets, watched here and there by a haggard woman from behind a blind, but in the main unseen.

There were men dying horribly from tetanus; men whose wounds had already con-

tracted the mysterious and terrible gas-gangrene; men from the trenches hit in the head and in fits; men caught in the open and wounded in the legs from hail of shrapnel.

There was nothing that love could offer, money buy, or skill ensure, that was withheld from their charges by those kind Americans.

And the death-sentence in that hospital was always passed in words that summed up the spirit of the place.

"Give him champagne," it ran.

The same illimitable loving-kindness was extended to all—Germans included.

For there were three Germans in one of the small rooms. They talked German to themselves; and one of the nurses knew German, and they didn't know she knew it. They were not nice men, she reported.

Nurse Merton was glad she did not have the nursing of them.

"Of course, I should have done it if I'd been ordered to—*but* . . ."

The word, and the snap with which she said it, was evidence enough of what she felt about it and them.

The Germans were not in the hospital for long.

Somehow the Algerians got to hear that there were *boches* under the same roof—*trois officiers boches!—hst!—in the little room above the diet-kitchen.* And they whispered among themselves. . . . When they got about again. . . . True, Yussuf had only one leg now, but he had his hands—long and strong and brown. And Suleiman was blind, but Yussuf could lead him; and Suleiman had his hands too. And Ibrahim, who had no hands now, had feet, big and booted, and teeth. . . .

It was thought well to remove the *boches* before the Algerians quitted bed.

It was not till the wounded were well enough to get up, and begin to hobble about the ward, that Nurse Merton saw War as it was and understood it.

Then it came to her in a flash.

She was used to sick men, used to wards, used to accidents. But in the hospitals to which she was accustomed men as a rule when well enough to move about were through their troubles and almost whole again. It was dif-

ferent here. Here you had giants, staggering about the wards, blinded for ever and not by accident; young men who would live, or rather not succeed in dying, for another sixty years; lithe and beautiful lads who would be helpless and hideous for the rest of their lives. And they were not the victims of disease or mischance. That was the point. They were the victims of the deliberate malice of men, ordered on a gigantic scale.

It was then that this calm, grey-eyed young English woman began to understand the Spirit of Hate that seethed upon every side of her—aye, and in her own despite, to enter into it.

The woman in her—the potential mother of men—blazed furiously within at the waste and the wickedness of it all.

Most of all at night, in charge of a ward, alone with an auxiliary nurse and an orderly, that Spirit possessed her and she understood; when suddenly in the silence a bandaged man, his black hair a-bristle and the sweat pouring down his ashen face, began to scream—

"Les boches! Les boches!"

And the whole ward woke in a moment, writhed, and tossed, and peered at the night-

light, stretching out maimed hands for rifles that were not there.

"Hola!" from the man from the Midi. "Est-ce-que c'est un assaut?"

And the little cockney's terrible cry—

"My God! 'ave the —— got us?"

And then the soothing voice of the big Breton artilleryman from the corner-bed—

"Dormez donc, mes enfants. Ce n'est que ce pauvre diable d'un Chasseur qui meurt."

Les Boches!

That was the name of the hideous Ogre who haunted the dying, tormented the living, and desecrated the dead; whose shadow lay across the face of Europe; who had snatched men by the million from the plough, the mill, the sheepcote, and the practice of the pleasant and profitable arts and industries; had taken them from playing with their children and chaffing their girls and put them to the handling of machine-guns and chucking of grenades; had torn and twisted comely youths; had gorged on women and girls; and sated his obscene appetites on children and even animals.

Les Boches!

The name that was a nightmare; that would

haunt the dreams of men for centuries; and stamp upon the mind of humanity such an impression of loathing and despair as Alva and the Inquisition had failed to do.

An atmosphere of hate incredible!

And because man is in his essence love, the strain of living in such an atmosphere for long will in the end undo the strongest.

In time it told even on Nurse Merton.

She worked on faithfully till the New Year.

The back of the business then broken, the hospital perfectly organized and volunteers ready to take her place, she said good-bye to the kind American doctors and nurses, and crossed the Channel to England, where under grey skies there was time once more to recall the daffodils beginning to blow on the hills of her native Guernsey.

THE INDIAN HOSPITAL

WHEN George the Fourth, then Prince of Wales, designed his Pavilion by the sea and turned the little fishing-village of Brighthelmstone into the fashionable watering-place we now know, he never surely dreamed of the use to which his great-great-nephew would put its halls and gardens a century later!

A tall brown stockade surrounds the garden now. Over it you see the domes and minarets and ornate roofs not of an Eastern palace, as you might expect, but of the pleasure-house of an English King. As we drove up to the gate a man in khaki stopped us. Then he saw the Doctor sitting at my side and saluted. The motor slid on through the garden and drew up at the entrance. On the seats by the lawns under the elms figures were sitting, strange indeed and yet not entirely out of place in that semi-Oriental environment:

men in blue coats and trousers, brown men with white pugarees bound about their heads. One came hobbling down the path on crutches, swinging a foot big as a punching-ball by reason of its bandages. An orderly in khaki passed him, shoving a kind of enlarged mail-cart such as children use. The orderly, a sturdy English youth with the close-cropped bullet-head of the private soldier, bore down on the back of the mail-cart, tilting up the seat of it—to balance his charge. And that charge was not a child. At first I thought it was an idol; then it seemed to me a man without legs; finally I recognized it for an Indian soldier squatting cross-legged on the seat.

The Englishman, tilting his brown charge and whistling as he came, made down the hill under the elms in the February sunshine at a little skipping run.

He was a small man and merry; thick-set, close-knit, with a kind of robin-redbreast cockiness; big red hands, swift to help, grey eyes always on the verge of a wink, and lips a little grim and masterful, but ready at a moment to twist into a whistle or a joke.

He lacked, perhaps, the dignity and repose

of his patient; yet stamped upon him was that solid ugly-cornered something which we call Character, that has won for him and his fathers such Liberty as no other people know and suzerainty over the 350 millions in that far continent from which the brown man on the mail-cart came.

The little scene compelled my attention; and well it might. For it was the sum and the symbol of one of the strangest and most significant happenings in history: the East, enthroned, sheltered, and served by the West, which it in its turn had served and sheltered with its body and blood.

The Doctor, a Major for the purposes of this War, was beckoning me from the door. I followed him, catching as I entered a glimpse of an old board on one side of the entrance. On it, painted in letters dingy with the age and weather, were the words:—

ROYAL PAVILION

These floors which of old answered to the nimble feet of courtiers, the swish of ladies' skirts, and the music of mazurkas and minuets, echoed now to the stump of crutches, the slither

of slippered feet, and the shuffle of carrying parties bearing patients to and from the operating theatre set up in what was of old, perhaps, the royal pantry.

In the entrance-lobby there was a group of brown men. Some were playing cards and some were watching the players. With their dark faces, the red scarves bound about their heads, an occasional crutch, or peep of white bandage, they looked like a jolly pack of pirates out of one of Stevenson's books. But surely no cutthroats ever looked quite so happy, or grinned with such utter honesty, as those ugly little men who sat round the table slamming down the cards.

"Ghoorkas!" said the Doctor in my ear. "Ripping little beggars!—full of fun—and so game."

"Tenshon!" came the voice of one of the men, the English word of command emerging drolly from an un-English throat.

The little group of Mongols, with their high cheek-bones, smear of moustaches, and the Chinese eyes from which all the fun and friendship in the world seemed to pour in twinkling torrents, rose on their crutches, those of them

who could. Those who could not, raised their hands in salute as they sat.

We moved down a long passage in which brown men in blue lolled about and limped, and white men in brown bustled.

For in this Hospital with its hundreds of beds the nursing is of necessity done by the men.

No woman may touch a patient; and the few sisters on the staff may not be present in the wards during meals, lest their shadows fall across the food and defile it.

In the passage are two trolleys, one labelled *Hindoo Corn Store,* and one *Mohammedan Corn Store.* For in matters great and small the British Raj has been faithful. Down to the smallest item it has respected the beliefs and the traditions of its subjects from the East. In the Pavilion-Hospital there are two kitchens and two stoves. And Mohammedans and Hindoos take their food in the certainty that it has been prepared in accordance with the immemorial usages of their fathers.

At the end of the passage a door opened.

We passed round a screen.

The Dome at Brighton to-day is such a sight

as our fathers never saw, as our children are little like to see again.

England needs a Wordsworth to wander through that maze of beds and strike off his impression in an imperishable sonnet. And yet perhaps only a Turner could do justice to that scene, handing down to our descendants, in colours that will never fade, something of the poetry and the passion of this spectacle, so pathetic in its immediate significance, so tremendous in its import to the race, and so uplifting to the heart that feels and the eye that sees and understands.

In that vast gilded room where of old King George gossiped, and Fox drank, and Wilberforce expounded; where in our time General Booth has preached, and Paderewski played, and Lloyd George spoken, the floor to-day is white with beds. They are under the chandelier, against the organ, on the terrace, beneath the balcony—flocks of them. And in each white bed is a brown face, uplifted to the banyan-tree that by a happy accident decorates the roof. Men of every race from that great continent which thrusts like a heart into the Indian Ocean are there; some dark as Othello,

some fair almost as you and I; some with the noses of eagles, some short-faced as pugs; clean-shaven and bearded; big men and little; splendid and insignificant; tubby and lank.

At the foot of each bed is hung a board; and on the board is recorded the man's name, regiment, the nature of his wound, and the like.

As we thread our way amid the beds, the inmates look at us with their soft brown eyes, so grave, so respectful, so affectionate; and their hands go to their foreheads.

"Salaam, Huzoor."

"Salaam."

And they give us the impression that we have done them a signal honour in permitting them to make of their bodies a living sacrifice for us and ours.

We move from bed to bed.

Here a splendid young Sikh, his hair a-loose from its rings and flowing about his neck in glorious black rivulets, is re-winding his long pugaree.

There a Ghoorka boy, aged eighteen, oiling his scalp-lock, grins at us like a friendly bull-

pup as we pass. The Dogra in the bed hard by handles a little leather purse that lies at the bedside and beckons us.

"Bee-ullet," he says. "Bee-ullet"; and shows us the jagged bit of copper that the Doctor has extracted from his body.

Under the chandelier a tall man, with both hands bandaged and in splints, is standing by a bed. In it a soldier in a skull-cap, with a sombre Afghan type of face, sits up erect and appears to be praying. He is the one man in the Hospital with a grievance. And this is his grievance: that he saw the man who shot him, and they carried him away before he could deal with his enemy. But some day he is going back—to find his man: during the war, if God wills: and if not after. But he is going back. It is not Germany he has anything against, it is one German.

In the corner-bed by the door is a convalescent. For all his flowing beard and air of dignity he is a joker, and has gathered about him a knot of others lured by the laughter. He points them out to us with pride, telling off their nationalities.

"Jat—Dogra—Pathan."

"Is that man a Pathan?" asks the Doctor, surprised.

The others nod.

"But where are his ringlets?"

"Me old Pathan," explains the object of attention, and somehow between them they made us understand that it is only the young bloods who sport ringlets.

On the floor, at the bedside, squatting on a towel, is a patient figure laboriously cleaning his teeth with a bone.

The joker in the bed, who is holding a cardboard-box in his hand, releases the top. A paper snake springs out and coils about the neck of the man on the towel, to the delight of all.

Indeed, in spite of the suffering, one is struck by the atmosphere of almost childish happiness prevailing in the place.

They know nothing of the greatness of the cause in which they have bled; they care little for what we call Democracy, these men of a race for ever old and for ever young. Militarism does not disturb them. They do not trouble themselves greatly about the rights of

smaller States and the sanctity of International Law. They are willing to trust in the judgment of you and me who entered upon this War and asked them to bear their heroic part in it. They were content to fight because we asked them; and now they are content to suffer. It is a triumph of faith.

Were you to ask them what it is all about they would answer you that for a time in the bazaar and in the lines there were many rumours. Then one day the Colonel-Sahib rode on to parade and said—

"Come, children. The Sirdar calls."

And they came—across the black waters their fathers feared so terribly.

They came, not as Cromwell's plain russet-coated captains came to him, not as the men of the North came to Abraham Lincoln, because they believed in the cause for which they were to fight, but because they believed in the men who led them.

They came, and they fought. These men, whose fathers have dwelt for so many ages round about the Tropic of Cancer that the skins of the children have changed under the sun from white to brown, fought under condi-

tions which, if they were terrible to the soldiers of our race, were to them appalling. They do not fear the cold, these men of the Punjab and the North-West-Frontier Province and the hills beyond. Nights are sharp in the Land of the Five Rivers and the frost bites keen in the Valley of Peshawur. But they tremble at the wet. And as it chanced this was the wettest winter on record. The men of the Bikaneer Desert, and the gaunt Afridi hills, and the sun-dried plains of the Ganges, fought against an enemy they feared far more than any Germans—bitter slush up to the knees, sleet like arrows of steel, drenching mist, rain in torrents loud enough to drown even the roar of high-explosive shells; they fought, until they were sodden to the bone, and the souls of them cried out from the trenches for the sun, the sun, the friendly old sun, who had never failed them before, and now seemed lost for ever in that midnight of murk.

In spite of the conditions they fought, and they fought well. Kitchener has said it in the House of Lords, and French in his dispatches. For two months, with their faces towards their own country and their backs to ours, they held

a line which was never dented more than 300 yards at any spot.

Returning soldiers say you could always tell the trenches held by the Indians, because of the silence that prevailed in them. The English trenches were always a-buzz: the Tommies, like a host of sparrows, chirpy, cheeky, taking off their superiors surreptitiously, chaffing the Germans over the way, chipping each other. The Indians did not talk: they did not dream. They stood in the wet and died—without complaints but without enjoyment. When their white officers said "Follow!" they rose and followed. When there were no more sahibs to follow they stood until, undermined by frostbite, they fell on their faces in the mud and were carried over the sea to the Hospital provided for them by the Emperor who inspected them on the plains below the Palace of Delhi three years ago.

And here they are happy. There is no question about it. It may be that throughout the Western world to-day it is in the Hospitals rather than elsewhere that the peace which passeth all understanding is to be found. Cer-

tainly it is so here. These Indians in England are not in exile. At least, if they are homesick they do not show it. Amid those hundreds, lying maimed beneath the Dome, thousands of miles away from their native land, under a wintry Western sun, I saw but one who seemed unhappy: a young Sikh giant, lying with face contorted, and the tears standing on his cheeks.

The men of his race, splendid as himself, stood by on crutches, apparently unmoved.

"Is he very bad?" I asked.

"No," answered the Doctor. "Hysteria. Slight shrapnel wound and frost-bite."

The man sat up in bed, the tears streaming down his face, and in his own tongue made a passionate appeal to the Doctor.

His fellow-countrymen stood by with downward eyes, half-ashamed, half-amused.

One of the few sisters steps forward to explain.

"I called him a baby," she said, "and the men have been teasing him."

The Doctor passes on with a little smile; and when we return a few minutes later the man is out of bed chaffing another patient.

All the Sikhs are not like that. Indeed, of the various races represented here they impress the stranger most by reason of their noble stature and bearing. And it is curious to recall that it is but a few decades since the fathers of these men who are fighting our battles in Flanders were following the Lion of the Punjab in vain assault on the British line at Sobraon and Chillianwallah and Goojerat.

They are men of religion and the sword, now as then. Like the Nazarenes of old, they never shave the head nor touch strong drink.

To the practical Western spirit their faithfulness has its disadvantages.

One man had a depressed fracture which resulted in paralysis of the arm.

In the Pavilion-Hospital every patient is free—free to die if he prefers it to an operation.

The situation was explained to the patient. An operation on the head could cure him of his paralysis.

Would he have it done?

Would he have to be shaved, O Saviour of the Poor?

No; but in the course of the operation it might be that some of his hair would be cut.

Then he would not be done.

"Why not?"

"It is against my religion, Huzoor. Pathans shave their heads; Sikhs never. What says the Guru?"

And he is paralysed still.

As we passed slowly on a face in a bed beneath the balcony drew me. It was dark, bearded, and full of pain. The man was lying on his back, and from the way he swayed his head it was clear to me that he could not move his body; and the reason too seemed clear, for his feet appeared to be contained in a kind of barrel, concealed beneath the sheets, which it humped and rounded.

As I moved, the man's eyes followed me.

I looked at the board at the foot of the bed, and read the fatal and frequent legend.

Frost-bite in both feet.

Something drew me to him; something drew him to me. Our eyes met and called. I went to his bedside.

He was a Punjabi Mohammedan and could talk a few words of English. Leaning a little out of bed he drew his hand across my shinbone about six inches above the ankle, with a gesture horrible in its significance.

"Froz-bite," he said. "Operation."

"Better now?" I asked.

He rolled his head about, his eyes clouded with pain.

"Leedly better now. One, two, three operation."

I asked him when he would be going back to India.

He didn't know.

"My job horses. . . . India-rubber leg."

I asked no more; and he spoke to me of Ferozabad "in U. P.," where he had lived, and Mhow where he had been quartered, and the ammunition column to which he had belonged.

Did I know Amritsar?

Yes; I knew Amritsar, and the Golden Temple, and the Holy Book.

Amritsar was the home of the Sikh Gurus. Doubtless Lon'on would be the home of the Gurus of the Sahibs. I would be a Guru from Lon'on? Was it not so? Clearly: for

I had a beard. No Sahib had a beard unless he was a Guru. Would I, the Guru from Lon'on, so wise and world-famous, take two biscuits from Ali Mahomed, the driver in the ammunition column?

As I left him clutching the English comic paper somebody had given him, he said, with the insinuating courtesy of the East—

"You come again. Not to-morrow. No. three—four day. Friday."

His face was still with me as I quitted the Dome—dark-eyed, patient, full of pain, and above all familiar. I had seen it somewhere before, I was sure—in the Louvre, perhaps; crowned, I think, with thorns.

We passed out into the garden in the February sunshine.

Beyond the high brown palisade the trams were sliding up and down Pavilion Parade; and along the top of the trams you could read the advertisement boards of an old and vulgarized civilization that died suddenly of shock early in August last.

The reminder that Tamplin's Ales are the best, 1s. 6d. the bottle, and that Selfridge's

is the shop for outfits, comes to you as out of another world. And the men and women on the roofs of those moving trams, most of them immersed in green or pink afternoon papers, seem scarcely aware that one world is falling into ruins about their ears and another springing out of those ruins. Hardly do they trouble to glance over the palisade and see the process of the miracle going on apace within.

I turn and look back at the building.

On the balcony, overlooking the lawn, are other convalescents. A young and very handsome Rajpoot waves to me. I have never seen him before. He has never seen me. But he waves to me; and I wave back.

Then a bullet-headed British orderly takes his place on the balcony beside the Rajpoot, and winds his arm about the shoulder of the son of a hundred kings.

And thinking of those two on the balcony, with their heads in such close conjunction, I have hardly a glance for the magnificent Sikh Havildar with the beard twisted about his ears, who salutes us at the gate as we go out.

THE CONSCRIPT

HIS little round cap lay in the hall, blue beside the brown one of the Doctor-Major, as I came down the stairs.

I entered the drawing-room.

It was a curious scene, such as you may come upon anywhere in England to-day: two ladies in evening-dress, standing by the fire, a man in khaki, and that other.

A slight, pathetic figure in his plain uniform of the conscript, he made: the small blue coat with the brass buttons, the red thread round each sleeve, flannel trousers of that peculiar grey which we associate with young men at Oxford and Cambridge, and boots, solid enough, it is true, but of the kind that have clearly been turned out by the hundred-thousand.

He was quite a boy, not more than nineteen at the most, his hair brushed back from his forehead in the straight style, guiltless of part-

ing, that would have betrayed him to any Englishman as a foreigner; and there was something shy yet ardent about him.

He was a boy; but he should have been a girl. And it needed only a glance at his dark eyes, full of fire, humour, and hope, to see that he was one of the sensitive of earth—a poet in embryo, maybe. Indeed, he made at once the appeal of that which is patient and at the same time brave. He was a Spirit—so much was clear. That is to say, he could suffer. And he had suffered, as his story showed, and had emerged from the bottomless pit unconquerable still—by no means a hero, but a human being who could enjoy life and laugh about it. His erect, sprightly figure, his sensitive, swift face, his little rounded chin, his girlish mouth, his white, delicate hands, and above all his eyes, told the same tale. There burned in him still the Flame of Youth and Hope and Joy unending. Men and Circumstance had tried to put them out, and had failed. This boy, for all he had been through, was still a boy. He could laugh, and he did laugh. Indeed, throughout dinner and after, he flowed forth in one continuous delicious babble, breaking for

ever into little cataracts of mirth. That was his triumph; and the triumph of Nature, which had made him at once so infinitely sensitive to impression and so capable of recovery when seemingly broken for ever.

Certainly if ever there was an organism not devised for the battle and the trench and the brutalities of war, it was this little Belgian boy. His place was in the studio, the laboratory, the library, moving among ideas, somewhat remote from the crude fisticuffs of the life of action; a lad this, clearly, to be loved by women, spoiled perhaps by them; misunderstood, avoided, tolerated by the average man. . . . In a word, he was the Eternal artist. And it was this refined and delicate creature whom the Monster of Militarism had swallowed whole and prostituted to its own terrible purpose.

His country had stood out against the Monster long after it had engulfed neighbouring France and Germany. Till a few years back the Belgian rabbit had stolidly refused to be swallowed by the Python of to-day. Then the Shadow of Death, creeping out of the East, always more ominous, had compelled the

stubborn little land to submit to what seemed inexorable necessity. Belgium girded her reluctant sword about a waist that many years of comfort and good-living had not left slim.

She raised an Army—at first by ballot. But the ballot, so the laughing boy told us, was not satisfactory. There was corruption, gross and obvious. The poor suffered; the rich escaped; the honest were indignant. And after that as the Shadow of Death from the East came always closer and grew always more ominous, there was Universal Service.

Our boy did not escape, nor, to be just, did he wish to. A native of Liège, he was a student at the University there, and became in due course a foot-soldier "dans la compagnie de l'Université."

As a student he had only to do fifteen months' service, and I am sure he did not take his soldiering very seriously. Indeed, I do not think François took anything more seriously than was good for him just then. Why should he? He was young enough to be sure that Youth would never pass away—from him at all events. He was as full of frolic as an April lamb. And he was a Liègois and a

learned man in the making, dabbling deliciously in science and letters.

His must have been an ideal life in that busy, prosperous, old-world town on the frontier. I do not suppose the boy bothered his young head greatly about the Shadow advancing always from the East, over which his father and the older men shook bald heads of Sunday evenings as they drank their café and sucked their cigars. He had most of the things that make life delightful for a boy: abroad his University, at home, father, mother, and little sister Julie. An ideal life in the little town of an ideal land. And as we dined, and the boy chattered gaily on in his naïf, delightful way, he gave us gleams of a country that, to the sophisticated West, sounded almost like Fairyland.

The Queen of that land was ill, it seemed, at one time; and everybody loved her and was very sorry—François and little sister Julie by no means least. So the boy and girl must needs sit down and write to their Queen—"une charmante lettre, s'il vous plait, Monsieur, tout-a-fait charmante."

He said it so seriously and at the same time

with such clear recognition of the humour of the remark, that we accepted it in twinkling silence.

And if you please the Queen wrote back herself to her faithful François and Julie—

"Une lettre, aussi charmante, s'il vous plaît, Monsieur."

After this it was not surprising to be told that the King of such a country is just like everybody else.

"No state—point du tout."

He comes out of his palace and walks about the market-place, buying his own "bacca"; and you meet him, and rub shoulders and take off your hat, and say—

"Bon jour, votre Majesté."

And he answers—

"Bon jour, Monsieur."

It sounds like an idyll; and it is true.

It seemed almost redundant to ask him if such a King was beloved; but I did so. And the answer, with a smile and a little shake of the head, rewarded if it surprised me.

"No, Monsieur, he is not beloved. Before the War he was beloved. To-day he is *adored.*"

That was how things had been.

Then suddenly they changed.

The Shadow that had been creeping up from the East for two generations suddenly launched forward and overwhelmed the land. All was pitch darkness; and in the darkness there came the sound of seven million men, women, and children, holding their breath and waiting for the thunderbolt to be hurled.

The moment passed; and in the darkness the seven million woke and wrought feverishly.

Day and night, without sleep, they wrought.

François, the little student, left the lecture-room, ceased his tennis with Julie, and his fooling with his fellow-students, and joined his company. He was a foot-soldier in earnest now. For four days and nights he worked—how he worked! The delicate hands, used to wielding a singularly graceful pen and turning the leaves of Verhæren's poems, were engaged now in desperate navvy work. Liège was being put into a condition of defence. All day François carried railway sleepers, which were used in building earth-works.

"They were heavy, Monsieur—too heavy."

By day and night that slight student laboured under his new burthen with others in his company.

His officers were kind men and brave—*mais pas experimenté, si vous comprenez, Monsieur.* They did not even know how to build trenches. That they learned later—from the English.

Then one night, as they tried to sleep amongst their raw, unfinished work, François heard far overhead a faint tap—tapping. He said to his sergeant, rolled in a blanket at his side—

"What's that?"

The sergeant answered—

"Aeroplane."

But François, the wise, knew better.

"Zeppelin," he said.

And as he said it a searchlight was turned on to the sky, and they saw *une énorme cigare* sail by above them.

Next day the thunderbolt fell.

There were marchings and counter-marchings. To François at least it seemed that a battle was the strangest kind of muddle; but the work was not so hard as that carrying of

sleepers that preceded it. He was busy and excited; too busy to go and inquire how it fared with Papa and Mama and Julie, too excited even to think very much of them.

Then the retreat began. François was in the 11th Infantry. His was the last company to leave. Whether it was the duty of his company to cover the retreat or not he didn't know. He only knew it was all very terrible. There were no officers and no orders. Broken units, hopelessly intermingled, poured along the road that ran beside the railway towards Brussels.

And the retreat continued day after day from one town to the next—in at night, out next morning.

But in spite of it all there was always hope in the heart of the defeated.

"Toujours—toujours—toujours!"

It was a nightmare shot with gleams.

Finally François found himself at Antwerp—Anvers he calls it.

By this time his highly strung organization had been strained to breaking-point. Happily in Anvers he found a Liège doctor working in the hospitals. François was employed

as an orderly and was only in the trenches once or twice. And he was glad: he told us all about it in the frankest way. It was not pleasant in those trenches—by no means. If you put your head above them only *so* much it was bad for your head! And it grew worse as the days went on.

Round Anvers ran two *ceintures*—earthworks with barbed-wire entanglements and the like. The Germans brought up guns; and the shells from those guns flew both *ceintures* and landing in the town set fire to it.

The position became impossible; and the Army retreated to Ostend.

François went by hospital-train.

"C'était plus comfortable, je vous assure," he told us with a delightful little giggle.

At Ostend the Army reorganized and François rejoined his company.

He was back in the trenches, sleeping in them, head in hands, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Dixmude.

One morning his company was ordered to advance.

They started through the town, which was being shelled. As they cleared the church,

half the company bolted. The other half went on.

They reached the outskirts of the town. Before them was the enemy's position.

"There's no point in all of us getting killed," said the captain, who was something of a philosopher. "No. 2 section stay behind; No. 1 section come with me."

François was in No. 1 section.

They advanced at the double across the open.

Suddenly they heard a sound like an enormous swarm of bees buz-z-zing straight at them.

"C'était un obus!"

Down they went on their faces. The shell exploded behind them. No one was hit.

Forward once more!

Again that monstrous buz-z-z!

Down they went again—all but François.

He tells the tale with rivulets of laughter, delighting in it.

"Me, I could not. I stood erect—*nerfs tendus*. I knew that shell was for me—for me—only for me—*absolument!*"

Poor François! all but his body, stiff with

fright, had collapsed. The Man of Imagination suffered where the Men of Earth won through.

He was the one man hit—in the head and arms.

The rest fled like ants.

Two men came back and carried him to a cattle-shed in which were other wounded. An English doctor, wounded himself, tended him.

François was put on an ambulance in a long convoy. A German shell killed the horses in the next ambulance.

"C'était le signal de depart!" tittered François.

He was bumped along to Calais; and from Calais taken to Southampton. The voyage took forty-eight hours; and there was nothing to eat or drink. One wounded man gave François a biscuit and tended him. Otherwise he would have died.

When he reached the hands of the Doctor-Major he was in a terrible condition, not so much from his wounds as from nervous exhaustion.

And even now he is not himself.

"I cannot study, Monsieur le Docteur," he

complains. "Directly I try my head goes round. Also I have indigestion, Monsieur le Docteur. And I have a pain here. . . ."

And he recounts his symptoms one by one before us all.

But since he has been in England François has had his little triumphs.

The King and Queen came down to see him and his wounded compatriots.

François tells the story as always with gusto and wit.

They were all formed up in the hospital; and a little sergeant, full of himself, strutted into the ward with his chest out, and shouted—

"His Majest-ee!"

The King followed, walking with great dignity, and very slow; and spoke to François.

"You are wounded in the arm, I hear?"

"Yes, Sire."

"Are you happy in England?"

And François answered with a little speech that surely was inspired.

"I am not happy in exile, your Majesty. But when I leave England I shall do so as sorrowfully as when I left Belgium."

After the King came the Queen.

"I was not afraid of the King, but I was afraid of her," François confesses. "Elleavait la figure sevère—très sevère."

But she asked him after his people, and whether he had brothers and sisters. And he told her about Julie; and they were friends at once.

Indeed, there is only one shadow over the life of François to-day, and that concerns his little sister.

His father and mother are still in what remains of Liège, and so is Julie. The father and mother will stay where they are whatever comes; but Julie, who is seventeen, must be smuggled across the frontier at any cost before the Great Retreat begins.

Belgium has known Prussia in attack; and Belgium has to know Prussia in retreat, and Belgium is not looking forward to the experience.

The conscript has risen, and with his manners of a little gentleman is thanking infinitely Monsieur le Docteur and his lady for their hospitality.

But as he goes out, the two brass buttons shining solitary in the hollow of his erect young back, it seems to me that it is rather to him that our infinite thanks are due.

THE MAN IN COMMAND

I

WAR, if it tries the men, proves the women no less. It has always been so. The horn, blowing the warriors of the tribe to battle of old, called the women away from the wattled hut, the distaff, and the children, to the handling of the plough and the driving of the mattock.

And Englishmen, who for a generation had been waging against men the most ferocious and pertinacious campaign in history, at the first tap of the drum abandoned their struggle for rights to take up duties forsaken by their soldier-mates.

The change amounted almost to a miracle.

It was as though a regiment of troop-horses, stampeding in the lines, had, despite themselves, fallen into the ranks at the sound of the trumpet.

In the days to come, when the Final Peace has been established, a poet will sing or an

historian record the part that women played in the Great War which made that Peace possible.

To us in England during the last year the change has come so gradually as to be less perceptible than to a stranger arriving suddenly in our midst.

But still, in absent moods, you can catch yourself surprised to find at the barrier in the railway station, on lifts at stores, behind the counter of the bank, the face of a woman greeting you.

And it is not only the girls of the working-class who have taken up the burden laid upon them by their country.

Women are farming the lands, and running the estates of men who are hanging on by the skin of their teeth to the rocky fringes of the Gallipoli peninsula, sweeping the North Sea, soaking in the trenches.

Here, in the heart of Sussex, in almost every country-house within hail, a woman to-day reigns supreme in the absence of her lord.

A year ago our chauffeur was an ex-cavalry-man. He had been through the siege of Lady-

smith and come to us as coachman at the end of the war.

A charming fellow, with a witty tongue and a wide experience of life, he had but one fault: he was a bad coachman. For years he dreamed a dream—that the Colonel would abandon horses and take to a motor.

In July of 1914 the miracle, long prayed for, and long delayed, took place. The Colonel bought a car, and Lingfield learned to drive. There were few happier men. As he sat behind his wheel you saw that he had realized the ambition of a lifetime. The heir had come into his kingdom at last.

A month later War was declared; and Kitchener appealed to all old soldiers to rejoin. After a spiritual conflict, the history of which will never be written, Lingfield answered the call. He left his wife and children, and above all his car, and went back to the colours.

There was no question of engaging another chauffeur. The new car stood unused in the coach-house alongside the station-cart.

In the stable there was left one cob, young in years, ancient in appearance and in gait.

Miss Kate, the Colonel's daughter, an athlete and an artist, abandoned her art and became coachman.

Daily she flogged the old-young cob with the reluctant soul into the market-town six miles away; shopped, picked up or deposited the rare visitors; and flogged the six miles home again.

Then the Colonel, who had been failing long, began to die.

His eldest son left for France in October in command of the Horse Artillery battery his father had commanded thirty years before. All through October and November he fought with the Immortal Division that had flung itself across the path of the seaward-striving barbarians; he fought, his guns in action at bow-shot range, to prevent those hordes breaking in on the dying of that old man in that lonely house in the Sussex Weald.

Those were Napoleonic times. An invasion was possible and prepared for.

Miss Kate had her instructions and made her arrangements with the bailiff. The cattle were to be driven inland to the castle on the hill. No living creature was to be left on the

farm. Horses and carts were to be removed. What forage could not be taken away was to be destroyed. There was to be a vast inland trek; and the enemy on landing was to find the counties on the coast wasted, as Belgium had not been before the war.

In those days Death crept always closer in that upper room.

Then one night in February the Colonel came to grips with his enemy.

Miss Kate was called up at midnight, harnessed the cob, and drove through the lonely country lanes, haunted by creatures of the night, to fetch the doctor and bring out cases of oxygen.

There was no man to send; and no maid would dare those lanes. Miss Kate was swift and resolute; and time was everything.

During those last few days those same trees, stark against the wandering night, often saw the same valiant little figure making the same pilgrimage at the same hour.

Her face, always strong, became more spiritual.

She was suffering; she was striving; she was growing.

Just when the strain was worst, Boam, one of the men in the garden, asked for a rise in wages to meet the enhanced cost of living.

Miss Kate rated him furiously.

Boam held his peace and withdrew.

A day or two later the Colonel passed out of the sound of the guns He had loved.

He was carried to church one brilliant March morning in one of his own Sussex wains lined with moss, and drawn by his own horses: his Horse Artillery busby with its nodding plume, his sabretache and sword, laid on the simple oak coffin. His own men carried him into church, and out again, and lowered him into the grave.

There were left three women, and a farm, and garden.

In the garden were two men; on the farm three.

A fortnight after the Colonel's death Boam gave notice.

Miss Kate accepted it; and raised the wages of the other men to meet the rising prices.

Boam's desertion raised the question of the cob, for one of his duties had been to groom it.

The young cob was growing older every day. Always more frequently he tumbled on his nose and had to be laid up. And well or ill, he must be fed and groomed. Meanwhile the big car was standing idle in the coach-house; and friendly neighbours said that it was suffering accordingly.

Now there was an infatuated old dealer who every time Miss Kate drove into the market-town stopped her and asked if the cob was for sale.

"I'll give you £40 for him," said the dealer.

"I'm not selling," answered Miss Kate firmly.

When Boam gave notice she reconsidered her decision. Finally she sought the old dealer out. He renewed his proposal and she accepted it. He took the cob; she pocketed her £40; and spent some of it on learning to drive the car.

Miss Kate now ceased to be coachman and became chauffeur. For many years she had been head-gardener and keeper of the orchard, taking the prize for apples at the local show. And now she added to her labours the superintendence of the farm.

There was already a bailiff, and still more a bailiff's wife. And they had been there for twenty years. The bailiff was a kind man with gentle eyes and bracken-coloured beard; his wife a red-faced termagant, who ruled him with tempestuous tongue.

Twenty years ago King had run the farm single-handed. At the time of the Colonel's death he had two men under him; and the three together had done less than the one of old. For some years past the Colonel had been failing. The men had lain fallow; so had the land.

When Miss Kate took charge she found herself resisted on every side by a dull weight of slothful habit.

All through the winter months the cattle were in the yard. She wished to have them turned out by day in the fields, as did the neighbours. The bailiff shook his head.

"Can't do it, miss."

"Why not? Everybody else does."

"Never did it in the Colonel's time, miss."

"Well, it's got to be done in mine," said Miss Kate sharply.

She was masterful and had her way in that and every other matter.

The bailiff didn't like it.

Miss Kate was genuinely sorry for him.

For many years he had known no master; and now he had a mistress.

"When the war's over Mr. John'll come back and settle down here," she said one day, to comfort him.

He looked up sharply.

"What's that?" he said.

She repeated her remark.

It was clear that he was not well pleased. And later the Colonel's old soldier-servant reported that the bailiff had boasted at the public-house that Mr. John would never come back from the War, from which so few returned.

He was wrong. Mr. John did come back on a few days' leave.

All the other men on the place were pleased to see him. The bailiff was not, and his wife still less so.

Mr. John came—and went; and Miss Kate was left in charge.

From dawn her slight, athletic figure might

be seen marching the fields, scythe on shoulder, working in the hay, binding the corn, pulling a heifer out of the stream, ordering here, stimulating there, checking somewhere else. And at dusk she took her gun and walked the hedgerows, keeping down the rabbits.

The fields that had fallen into a drowsy sleep began to stir again, and the men to move.

She learned rapidly, gathering the reins of government into her hands, and finding out things all the time—unpleasant things, many of them, which made her unhappy: for the bailiff was an old servant, and she had believed in him. She had believed in human nature too. Contact with the realities of the struggle for life brought disillusionment. And when her mother asked in despair if there was no such thing as an honest human being, Miss Kate met her with a grim, dogmatic *No*.

The cows, she discovered, were giving only a fraction of the milk they should.

She tackled the bailiff about it.

"I'm not satisfied," she said.

To her amazement the man met her with a feeble—

"Don't be 'ard on me, miss."

Thereafter, quite suddenly, and for no reason, the milk-return increased by 50 per cent.

The bailiff was too simple a soul to be a successful rogue.

What happened to the surplus milk?

Miss Kate did not inquire too closely: she liked old King too much.

Then it turned out that Mrs. King was charging 2d. a dozen for eggs supplied to the house from the farm.

"Our own eggs, if you please!" commented Miss Kate.

She stopped that practice summarily.

Thereafter the bailiff's wife was insolent to Miss Kate's mother, a little old lady of nearly eighty. That angered Miss Kate. She went and talked to the woman.

"Expect to farm for nothing, I suppose!" said the woman impudently.

"I don't expect to lose £300 a year on the farm, Mrs. King," retorted the other.

Two days later in a sudden fury the bailiff gave notice.

To his obvious surprise it was accepted.

Miss Kate went round the farm to take the inventory.

In the scullery was a huge earthenware porringer.

Miss Kate looked at it.

"Useful for butter-making, I suppose," she said.

The red woman went white.

She answered nothing.

A month later, when I returned, the last of the corn was being carried.

I went down to the farm.

Miss Kate was standing on the top of a stack in her short skirt, her dog-leash girt about her waist, her hair ruddy against the sky, her big blue sheep-dog prowling about the foot of the stack. A man in the cart below was pitching the sheaves up to her; and she was laying them methodically.

That evening I wrote to brother John who is still Ypres-way—

Kate is master of the situation, and thoroughly enjoying herself.

THE HOUSE ON THE CLIFF

I SHALL not easily forget that brilliant evening last September when our motor climbed the hill out of the town and rolled towards the setting sun.

Beneath us the sea lapped against the white cliffs as of old; but the Gap, down which the children used to race to the beach, shouting in their glee, bristled now with wire entanglements and was blocked with impediments, while at the top was a wooden guard-house, a sentry-box, and men on duty.

Beyond the Gap houses grew scarce. We climbed a hill and dropped down a steep pitch. At the bottom of the hollow, standing alone, was a low, white house with a tiled roof that looked like a coastguard station; and beyond it across the plough a flint-wall, running down to the cliff and enclosing the wooded grounds of a great house, blocked the way.

Against that wall, a hundred yards away, paced a man in khaki with a flashing bayonet.

He was always there, day and night, wet or shine.

You could not get away from him.

One night when I could not sleep I turned on my electric light. The window was wide, and the curtains lifted occasionally in the wind.

As I read Motley's *Dutch Republic,* drawing faint comfort from the fact that even the Germans had not as yet out-done the Sack of Antwerp by the Spanish Furies, I was startled by a stern and peremptory voice from across the paling—

"Put out that light, please!"

It went out with a snap.

"Thank you," came the voice out of the night; and the man retired across the plough to his post beneath the wall.

All through the winter our lights were the Colonel's hobby, his anxiety, and delight. He was past soldiering, but his keen spirit drove him to do whatever he could do with all his might. He was terribly thorough. From bathroom, lavatories, passages, and halls the bulbs were removed to guard visitors against

temptation and servants against carelessness. You washed in the dark; and you said good-bye to your friends by the light of the moon. And every night when the blinds were down and the curtains drawn, the Colonel went his rounds prowling outside the house to espy if there were any crannies through which the prisoned light was filtering, and then going from window to window indoors, making good. And if about the hour of dark you went into one of the seaward rooms you would be pretty sure to be greeted by a spectral voice from the ceiling—

"I'm not very happy about this curtain."

And you would be aware of a gaunt and vulture-like figure perched on a table or chair, safety-pin in mouth, adjusting a chink.

And there was method in the Colonel's madness. For in those days there were eyes everywhere, in the sky and on the sea, the eyes of enemies and of jealously watchful friends.

Day and night the sea was whitened by the furious passage of ships driven through the foam on some tremendous and mysterious errand, or darkened by the shadow of merchant-

fleets at anchor, stayed by the same invisible hand.

The dockyards of England were belching forth streams of the strangest craft that ever took the waters; and sooner or later most of them came our way, and many others too: great grey monitors, steaming to bombard Zeebrugge, their single fighting-tops ugly as a bunch of mistletoe on a pole; little beetle-boats the use of which no man could guess; neutral ships with their flags painted hugely on their sides; and fleets of mine-sweepers from the seaport town beyond the wall.

Trawlers these last, out to catch other fish than herrings. And gallant little craft they are. We used to watch them bucketing along under the cliff, proud to be King's ships and used in the King's service, squadrons of them, their three-pounders in their bows, their sweeping-gear on a boom a-stern, buffeting out at dawn and home again at dusk. No weather daunts them; and their crews are of the old sea-dog stuff. In the steep streets of the little seaport town you may meet them: men in great sea-boots and tan-coloured breeches, their white stockings tucked over their boot-tops,

rolling along, battered and brown, sometimes with earrings in their ears, and always with the mark of their calling stamped as clearly upon them as had their forefathers in the days of Amyas Leigh. They had a rough time in those wintry seas too. During the great gale in February one of them got her screw over a submarine net. She could not clear herself, and the seas bombarded her. Slowly she foundered. The lifeboat put out to the wreck, and saved all the crew but one.

They brought the men in to our little harbour. The Colonel met them as they landed and took them into the old *Tartar Frigate* that in its life of centuries has seen many strange happenings.

"Glorious chaps," he reported. "Like pirates. We put 'em in front of the fire and poured whisky down 'em. And they went home merry as grigs."

Early in the War Zeppelins raided the seaport town beyond the wall where the minesweepers find harbourage.

Indeed, this corner of the coast has been a favourite haunt of enemy aircraft, as is after

all but natural, for it is nearer to the fighting line than any other part of England.

The sound of guns was in our ears by day and night. On the one hand we could hear the bombardment of the Belgian coast; and on the other was the continuing rumble of our own big guns being tested at arsenals near by. While once on a Sunday afternoon we heard the sudden phut-phut of a quick-firer in action near by, and running out on to the lawn saw a scurrying flotilla of destroyers beating off a seaplane attack.

Perhaps, then, it was little wonder that when first we came to the House on the Cliff we used to hear the hum of the engines of the Zeppelins overhead every night. They came with astonishing regularity at intervals of a quarter of an hour and stopped automatically as it were and, to be just, somewhat considerately, at midnight sharp. We used to lie in bed with clenched teeth, grimly enduring. And it was not till one day we climbed the hill at the back of the house and saw the main road with the tall standards of the electric tram running along it that we modified our letters to our friends.

When the Zeppelins really passed on their way to raid London they passed far out to sea over the Goodwins. We did not see them; and only the more imaginative heard their engines.

There was no imagination, though, about the uproar which woke us at midnight on New Year's Eve. It came from the sea, and was like the sound of a million Leviathans stampeding through the deeps. I crept to the window and peeped out. A heavy fog obscured the waters. And out of that white darkness came those bellowings of unimaginable terror. There was no mistaking what had happened. The German submarines were at work on the City of Ships from below, and the Zeppelins were bombing it from above. No wonder the unhappy victims bawled! The carnage lasted some fifteen shattering minutes. Then all was still. . . .

Next morning I sent for the doctor, and little wonder after what I had gone through.

"Did you hear that caterwauling in the night?" he asked in his jolly laughing way.

"I did," I answered faintly. "What of it?"

"It was the ships in the Downs blowing off

their syrens to welcome the New Year, of course," he said, and chuckled as he washed his hands. "A fool of a sentry thought it was Zeppelins and loosed off his rifle and nearly shot a donkey."

"Just like 'em!" I said, and laughed uproariously at the fellow's folly.

Then, two days before we left the House on the Cliff came the dark reality.

It was a February afternoon of the fairest. I was slowly climbing the last hill home, when of a sudden I was aware of I knew not what.

Some primeval instinct warned me to beware.

I stood with ears alert and sniffed.

There was a faint, strange smell in the air, and a faint, far humming.

I looked seawards. Nothing was visible but a remote destroyer. I gazed up into the heavens. Not a speck darkened the brilliant blue.

Then a man on the crest of the hill, fifty yards above me, a woman at his side, cried suddenly—

"There she goes!"

I looked again. And sheer overhead I

caught a flash and sparkle. It was infinitely far, a part of the blue; as though a tiny patch of heaven had suddenly crystallized.

For a moment I was astounded. The loveliness of that remote and shining something, on whose under-wings the westering sun was beating up, possessed and dazzled me. For one brief second I thought of a creature from another world, so bright it seemed, so impalpable, and above all so unimaginably remote; and I was afraid.

"What is it?" I cried to the man on the crest, my heart still full of awe and ecstasy.

"Just what I can't make out," he shouted back.

We had not long to wait for an answer.

There was a bang—bang—bang! And out of the green hillside across the valley, two hundred yards away, suddenly spurted great black mushrooms of smoke, one after another. Bang—bang—bang!—and one of the houses skirmishing on the outskirts of the town was enveloped in a dirty cloud.

"Take cover!" called a fierce, authoritative voice near by.

The man on the crest, who was lame, limped swiftly into his house, the woman scuttling before him.

I was left on the bare road, conscious of that fatal and beautiful thing poised plumb overhead.

I dared not look up. Were I to do so the falling bomb would surely catch me in the face; and I preferred to take it on the neck.

I made for the house opposite; it was empty and locked.

Then the lame man came running out.

"Come in here, sir!" he called.

But it was all over. And the creature from another world was flying homewards in the light of the sinking sun, the smoke of its handiwork pursuing it leisurely across the waters in pillars of soot.

A few minutes later I was standing on the hillside amid the little crowd of men in khaki, of women and children, gathered about the superficial craters caused by the bombs, and souvenir-hunting.

They were all very merry; congratulating themselves inwardly on their heroism; full of

that flatulent joy, and false *bonhomie,* which escape from sudden death engenders in all but the humble of heart.

One bomb, it seemed, had fallen through the roof of a girls' school, and passed through a room in which fourteen children were gathered, hurting none. Two had fallen in the playground; one had plumped through a house hard by.

A woman gashed by splintered glass, and a score of frightened children; these were the raider's harvest.

It all seemed incredibly trivial, spiteful, and silly. And it was War.

THE COST

HE was one of the men I had somehow believed could not die.

And when that May morning, with England at her loveliest, I read the notice in the always lengthening obituary of the *Times* I was—amazed.

The torpedoing of the *Lusitania,* recorded in the same paper, seemed to me somehow as nothing beside that other intimate catastrophe.

Then I took up the paper and re-read the notice.

It was not particularly to the point; for it dealt with him simply as an athlete. The real Ronald was clearly quite unknown to the writer; but there was one sentence in those half-dozen lines that lingered in my mind.

He was probably the greatest Rugby three-quarter back of all time.

He was: and he was much more.

And as I puzzled it all out—*our* hopes, *his*

opportunities, this sudden catastrophe—I found myself dully butting my head against the hard wall of the simple facts—

Ronald was no more. He had not died. He had been killed deliberately—this boy who never had an enemy, and who so loved his life.

C'est trop bête, la guerre, say the wise French peasants in their simple way as they till their fields up to the very trenches. And surely they are right. It is the stupidity of the thing, and not its wickedness, that staggers the modern mind.

And of all the stupidities of the war, this for the moment seemed to me the most crass.

Here was a beautiful creature—

> *A dust that England bore, shaped, made aware,*
> *Gave once her flowers to love, her ways to roam,*
> *A body of England's, breathing English air,*
> *Washed by her rivers, blessed by suns of home,*

with the youth in his limbs, the light in his face, the hope in his heart, stopped dead.

As I revolved the matter in my mind the occasion on which I had last seen him kept recurring to me.

It was at the time of the Welsh match in the April before the War. He was Captain of

the English team. I think the King was present, but I forget the King; though I have a hazy memory of seeing Ronald tripping down the steps from the dressing-room at the head of his team and standing in his football shorts and blue jersey shaking hands with a little man in a round hat before the Grand Stand.

It was very much Ronald's game that day. The thirty-thousand gathered to watch him were all agreed on that. His playing was as always original. It was as different from that of other men as he was different from them. It was spiritual; and its quality effortlessness. The strain, the ferocity, the contortions and grimaces, of others who indulge in that heroic and elemental tuzzle which is Rugby football were not for him.

Nobody ever saw him gnash his teeth on the football field; I doubt if anybody ever knew him cross; certainly nobody ever heard him swear. And I for one rarely knew him issue a command—certainly never a hortatory one—though he was usually Captain. A steady brilliance pervaded his play and personality alike. Always master of the game, he was consummately master of himself. And he han-

dled his men with the same unconscious ease with which he swooped and swerved through the enemy towards the goal.

An incident in the game comes back to me. It spoke to me at the moment of Ronald and his capacity for winning men. He had tackled an enemy three-quarter in full career. The pack was on them in a moment as they struggled and had smothered them. The two men emerged from beneath the worry at last; and the enemy three-quarter, as he withdrew towards his own line, gave an intimate little pat on the shoulder to the man who had wrought his headlong ruin and crushed in a moment the fruition of his plans.

I love you, it said.

And it was not only on the football field that his genius for government appeared. At Rugby, at Oxford, in those camps of working-men by the sea which he loved, in Boys' Clubs in mean quarters of great towns, it was always the same. He led, I think as much as anything, because he never sought to lead. Authority clothed him naturally as the grass the field. Men and boys acknowledged allegiance to a power they could not define and of which

the user was unconscious. The root of the matter lay perhaps in this: that there was no egoism in the man. He was one of the humble of heart, without a trace of morbid diffidence.

Therefore some believed that he had in him a power for bettering the affairs of men which none of his more brilliant Balliol contemporaries, greedy of power, voraciously ambitious, wearisomely successful, possessed.

Three months after his last International, War was declared.

At Oxford he had joined the Officers' Training Corps; but when the authorities urged him to become an officer he refused. Later, when he had left Oxford, it seemed to him his unpleasant duty to accept a commission in his county Territorial Battalion.

The adventure and romance of War made no appeal to him. It was a dirty business that had to be got through.

It may have been because his mother came of Quaker and his father of Nonconformist stock; it may have been that he had been brought up in the academic and not the im-

perial tradition; whatever the cause, it is surely worthy of record that perhaps the greatest athlete of his generation hated soldiering from his heart although he died in battle.

He hated soldiering and never took his sport in killing. As a tiny boy he protested against what seemed to him the wanton destruction of flies. Later in life, when he was one of the richest young men of his day, and the owner of a great estate, the pursuits of the *jeunesse dorée* only bored him. He never hunted, never shot; and never wished to do so.

"The horse was very fierce," he writes in his simple way, of a ride he once took.

It was not that he thought killing for pleasure wrong; it was that he disliked it.

He loved life himself, and in his large and sunny way he wished others to enjoy what he found so dear—the lower creatures too.

And it is a bitter commentary on things as they are that this young man, whose heart was brimming with loving-kindness, never killed anything deliberately save perhaps other men.

All through the hot and terrible days of August 1914, Oxford and Cambridge poured

their best into the ranks of Kitchener's Army.

The Expeditionary Force was flung into France. The Territorial battalions were mobilized, and might follow at any moment.

Ronald was an officer in one of these. As such he had taken on for Home Service alone, and had therefore the right to refuse to serve abroad.

At the outbreak of the War his father and mother were abroad; and two of his friends embassied half across England to urge him to consider his responsibilities and exercise his rights.

He was furious with them.

In fact, his battalion did not leave for the Front for another six months. And that six months did not make the profession that had been forced upon him any dearer.

"I had rather be making biscuits," he wrote to a friend.

In those days he changed. Something of the old radiance was departing from his face; and little wonder. His friends were falling like autumn leaves. The boys who had stormed across Bigside at Rugby in his victorious wake, the men who had followed him

to victory in many a University match, were going down in swathes. It was the platoon-leaders, the men of his own age, who were catching the full blast of lead and steel, that was sweeping over Europe. And his turn would come. He never doubted it.

"It's not what I should have wished," he admitted just before he went.

For he was happy in his life, happy in his opportunities, as are few.

His uncle, a great Captain of Industry, had made him his heir. And labouring as a common hand among the working-men he understood so well, in the immense biscuit factory which he was one day to control, he was quietly dreaming of the work to which he meant to devote his life.

He had the chance, and he had the capacity and the desire to make the most of it.

For his heart was set not on adding to his fortune, or going into Parliament, but on adjusting the relations between Master and Men.

Here was the task; and here apparently a soul supremely adapted by nature and opportunity to undertake it with success.

A casual bullet at midnight as he stood on

the parapet of a trench directing a fatigue-party ended his dreams and our expectations.

"We shall win in this war," said a soldier-friend to me the other day, "because in the end Love always wins."

It does; and the price is Calvary.

And he does not stand alone.

In the minds of many his name will be recorded with that of another youth, so like him, and yet so unlike.

The two were at Rugby together; of singular beauty and athletic excellence.

I do not know if they were friends at school. I should say probably not. For Rupert from boyhood was a poet, and Ronald a man of action.

The names almost betray the men and the difference between them.

After schooldays I doubt if they ever met: for the poet went to Cambridge, and the engineer to Oxford.

And it was typical that the one became a Fabian and lectured on the Minority Report, while the other plunged into the practical labours of Boys' Clubs. Ronald remained a

stout Churchman while Rupert was writing ironical verse about the creed of his fathers.

Again after they had left their Universities the one was sweating as a mechanic in the engine-room of a factory, while the other was sailing the South Seas and bursting into song in honour of dusky maidens.

Of the two youths it was difficult to say which was the more beautiful. Certainly I know no two young Englishmen who would have been more loved by the Greeks.

Rupert I saw but once; but I recall him well—his fair hair, rather longer than that of other men, his collar rather lower, his attire rather more négligé—sitting with his blue eyes and spiritual face in the window of a room overlooking the river at Chelsea, reading to a little Bohemian gathering a paper on what appeared to him the most urgent of Social Reforms—the guaranteeing by the State of a pension of £500 a year to every minor poet.

He was something more than a mere poetaster himself; though, apart from his personal beauty which gave him an unfair advantage, for long he by no means outshone his multitudinous rivals. Men—and women still more

—recognized in his face the poet of their dreams, read his verses in the light of that vision glorious, and trumpeted him as the master he was not.

The War touched him to immortality.

Contact with the brutalities of life stripped his fine spirit of its frills and furbelows.

It stood forth naked and radiant and unashamed.

He joined the Royal Naval Division, and the bombardment of Antwerp made a man and a poet of him.

Between the declaration of War and his death he wrote a handful of sonnets that will endure as long as English poetry.

And he lived just long enough to taste his fame.

A few weeks before he died Dean Inge quoted from the pulpit of St. Paul's his incomparable lines—

If I should die, think only this of me—

He did die—almost immediately; perhaps a month before his school-fellow.

The one lad sleeps in a wood in Flanders on the hither-side of our trenches; the other un-

der an olive-grove on an island in the Ægean Sea within sound of the guns wrangling over the Dardanelles.

And thousands of their peers—the boys they knew and sported with at school and University—sleep at their sides.

Let their just epitaph be—

They went to War in the cause of Peace, and died without Hate that Love might live.

THE END

"BORZOI" stands for the best in literature in all its branches—drama and fiction, poetry and art. "BORZOI" also stands for unusually pleasing book-making.

BORZOI Books are good books and there is one for every taste worthy of the name. A few are briefly described on the next page. Mr. Knopf will be glad to see that you are notified regularly of new and forthcoming BORZOI Books if you will send him your name and address for that purpose. He will also see that your local dealer is supplied.

ADDRESS THE BORZOI
220 WEST FORTY-SECOND STREET
NEW YORK

THE NEW BORZOI BOOKS
Published by ALFRED A. KNOPF

TALES OF THE PAMPAS By W. H. Hudson, author of "Green Mansions." Including what Edward Garnett calls "the finest short story in English." Three-color jacket. $1.25

A DRAKE! BY GEORGE! By John Trevena. A perfectly delightful tale of Devonshire, with plot and humor a-plenty. $1.50

THE CRUSHED FLOWER From the Russian of Leonid Andreyev. Three novelettes and some great short stories by this master. $1.50

JOURNALISM VERSUS ART By Max Eastman. A brilliant and searching analysis of what is wrong with our magazine writing and illustrations. Many pictures of unusual interest. $1.00

MODERN RUSSIAN HISTORY From the Russian of Alexander Kornilov. The only work in English that comes right down to the present day. Two volumes, boxed, per set. $5.00

THE RUSSIAN SCHOOL OF PAINTING From the Russian of Alexandre Benois, with an introduction by Christian Brinton and thirty-two full-page plates. The only survey in English. $3.00

SUSSEX GORSE By Sheila Kaye-Smith. A wonderfully vigorous and powerful novel of Sussex. A really masterly book. $1.50

RUSSIA'S MESSAGE By William English Walling, with 31 illustrations. A new and revised edition of this most important work. $2.00

WAR From the Russian of Michael Artzibashef, author of "Sanine." A four-act play of unusual power and strength. $1.00

MORAL From the German of Ludwig Thoma. A three-act comedy that is unlike anything ever attempted in English. $1.00

MOLOCH By Beulah Marie Dix. Probably the most thrilling play ever written about war. $1.00

THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL From the Russian of Nicolai Gogol, author of "Taras Bulba." The first adequate version in English of this masterpiece of comedy. $1.00

THE SHAVING OF SHAGPAT A handsome holiday edition of George Meredith's Arabian Entertainment. With fifteen beautiful plates and an introduction by George Eliot. Quarto. $5.00

All prices are net.

220 WEST FORTY-SECOND STREET, NEW YORK